

MYSTERIES OF FAITH OPENED UP.

Or some SERMONS concerning
two whereof were not formerly printed.

Wherein the Nature, Excellency, and
fulness of that noble Grace is much ex-
plained, and the practice thereof
powerfully proffed.

Whereunto are added three more
two concerning the Greatness
of these not formerly printed
a third concerning Death.

By that pious and worthy Servant
of Christ, Mr. Andrew Gray, late
of the Gospel in GLASGOW.

All these Sermons being now
revised and much cor-.

John 3.18. He that believeth
already, because he believeth
Name of the only begotten

Glasgow, Printed by R. D. and
are to be sold at his





CHRISTIAN READER.

Mongst many weighty and soul-piercing sentences that ye will find in these following Sermons, this is one ; That the professors of this age, whether they go to Heaven or Hell, they will be the greatest debtors that shal be in either place : the one to the free grace of God, and the other to his Justice. And certainly, if we speak of these in this time, whose blessed lot it shal be to inherit the Kingdom, they cannot but acknowledge themselves indebted to his love, above all that have gone before them, for washing them from such ugly pollutions, as this generation hath been defiled with, for bringing them through such great tribulations, preserving them in the midst of so great temptations, and dangerous snares, and have encompassed them ; yet, and still keeping in the light before them, notwithstanding of so many blasts (if we may so speak) from all the four winds of Hell to blow it out. And on the other hand, if we shal speak of these who in this generation shal perish, assuredly their debt unto Divine Justice must be exceeding great, above all who are gone down to the pit before them ; because the root of

their mercies will be found to have been many Cubits longer, and many Cubits broader, then theirs who lived in the preceeding ages, and the great things that the Lord hath wrought in our days, have born a greater testimony against the wickedness, hardness, and atheism of this time, then of many former. But above all, the great measure of Gospel light that he hath no less plentifullly offered then wonderfully preserved to this generation, beyond all our Ancestors, hath undoubtedly made ~~the sin of~~ these who shal utterly reject their own mercy so out of measure sinful; and their unbelief so exceedingly inexcusable, that their guili must needs justifie Corazin and Bethsaida, or Sodom and Gomorrah, In that day when every man shal give account of himself to God. And amongst the many preaching-witnesses, that (alace! we are afraid) shal comppear in that day against many yet living in their pleasures, and dead while they live; This now glorified Author cannot but be one, whose testimony must be very condemning, especially to the vain, loose, negligent, and time wasting youth in this age: For when he was first drawn forth to the Ministry, he was but a youth indeed, scarce twenty years compleat; for within that age, that by the Constitutions of this Church (except in case of more than common abilities, which indeed he had) is required for entring in that great and holy Calling: And for the space of two years after (which was all the time that the Church enjoyed his labour) he was helped to press the truths and threatenings of God so home upon the consciences of his hearers, that as it was observed

of him ; by one of his most learned and pious Colleagues, Master Durham, who is now in glory with him, he did many times cause the hair of their head to stand up : The Lord not only hereby verisying his Word, that he can take the weak things of the World to confound the strong ; and out of the mouths of babes can perfect his own praise : but designing also (as would seem of purpose) to send a boy out of the School for a reproof of the sluggishness of his people, that thereby the aged might be the more ashamed, and the younger more afraid. Neither do we think that this was all ; but truly when we consider what measure of graces, gifts, and experiences the Lord did bestow upon so young a person : and then with what humility, self-denial, gravity, prudence, diligence, authority and moderation, he was helped to manage these Talents, during that short time of his Ministry. It may be justly conceived that the Lord brought him forth to be a great conviction, even to many of us in the Ministry, who came into our Masters Vineyard long before him, and will go out behind him. And indeed to us it looketh somewhat like the Lord taking up of the little child, and setting him amongst the midst of his contending Disciples, in these times, that even they who would be greatest amongst us, might be the least, and see somewhat of their own weakness.

As to the little Piece, whatever ye shal find in it, it hath this to say for it self, that whereas many writings in the World do intrude themselves upon the Press, yet this the Press hath violently thrust into it.

world: For some young student, from his good affection to the edification of the Lords people, and (no doubt) from his high esteem of the precious Author his memory, having given into the Press a copy of some of these Sermons, being only notes taken from his mouth when he preached them; no sooner were they seen abroad, but all the Presses in the Nation fell a labouring about them, so that (if we mistake not) in less than two or three months time, three or four Impressions were cast of, yet all of them so imperfect and maimed, that howbeit the excellency of the matter, and the fresh remembrance of the worthy Author, his name made him very sweet to many (especially those who had heard him preach) yet the unsuitable dress wherein they appeared, and their mistakes of the first Writers (they being hard lyable to take up every thing as it was spoken) occasioning diverse material failings in the sense, besides lesser faults, could not but be a trouble to those who were acquainted, not onlie with the singular graces, but parts also of the eminent Touch. This gave occasion to some friends to speak a little what way these prejudices, which both the Truth and the Authors name might ly under, by these uncorrect Impressions. And finding that the Copy, which by providence the worthie young Gentlewoman, who was his wife, had lying by her, though it was but Notes taken from his mouth, yet was the most correct that could be found: And that it also did contain the whole purposes that had been preached upon the Texts; Yea, the whole purposes concerning Faith that he had preached, according to that method

TO THE READER.

7

method proposed in the first of the Sermons formerly published. This was undertaken to be revised by some, who albeit none of the fittest for the employments, yet rather or nothing should be done in the busines, were content to bestow some hours upon it, according as other necessary employments would permit.

And now having sought out all the Notes of these Sermons, which we could find from other hands, and compared them with the Copie above mentioned, we do again present them unto the Lords people, not with anie confidence that our pains hath put anie new lustre upon them; onlie we have some hopes that the whole subject being now before them, and these things in the way of expression helped, which either migh seem to be somewhat unpleasant, or lyable to mistakes, they shal not now be leſſ edifying, nor leſſ acceptable then formerlie they were. We did not think fit to make anie considerable alterations, as to the method, or other things of that kind, lest haplie by straining his excellent purposes too much, to shape them to the ordinarie rules, or to reduce them to that order which might best have pleased our selves, vve should have vronged the matter it self, at least have put them to a loss vwho did hear him preach, and it may be now upon their reading things in that same order as they heard them, vwill be the more readilie brought under the impressions of that liveliness, power and vveight which (it may be) formerly they felte upon their heart-when he vvas speaking.

If the method do not altogether satisfie some spir-
rits, or the explication seem not so full; or if they first se-

TO THE READER.

some introductions which possibly lead not in so close, or seem not so suitable to the subject of the sermons; or haply now and then there be some little digressions from the main purpose, we shal desire that this may not at all be construed to be the Authors ignorance of rules and method, or his want of abilities in humane learning it being well known to those who were best acquainted with him, that he had a scholastick spirit, and was in reading far beyond his age and opportunities for studying; but as to all these, we shal intreat you rather to consider: 1. His age, and that his gift was but in the very moulding and breaking (as we speak) in the point of order and method, when the Lord was pleased to call him home from his work.

2. That every man hath his proper gift of God, who in his great wisdom, and certainly for the good of the Church, doth so order, that there is somewhat singular and peculiar almost in every mans way, as to these things. 3. For any thing we know, he had never that high esteem of this, or any other of his labours, as to design any of them for publick view, and these are but Notes taken from his mouth. 4. We are perswaded he studied more his hearers then himself. Ye will easily perceive when ye have but read a little, that he hath been a man of a very zealous temper; that the great bensil of his spirit, and that which he did wholly spend himself about, was to make people know their dangerous condition by nature, and by all means to perswade them to believe and lay hold upon the great salvation: And truly that a man in such a frame should less attend to these lesser things, is not

to be wondered at. And indeed though these things be good in themselves, and worthy to be looked to in their own place; yet for a Minister of the Gospel, in all Auditories, and upon all occasions, to pin upon every purpose to such a method, and insist unto such a measure of explications and criticismes upon words, it is but to setier himself, and to starve his people.

5. Consider the dulness of the most part of hearers in this age, and how hard a thing it is to awake a sleeping world, and to get them but to think that it doth concern them to hear in earnest; and possibly it was not a small piece of spiritual wisdom in him (and it may be not unfit to be imitated by others) to begin or end all his sermons with an awaking word concerning Heaven or Hell, or Judgement, and the danger of choosing the evil, and refusing of the good. 6. For digressions, the truth is, that his soul was so filled with such longings after Heaven and Glory, and so inflamed with the love of Christ, especially toward the latter end of his race, that when he fell upon those subjects, upon which you will see most of these digressions are, he could not well contain himself, nor easily bring off his own spirit, a thing not unusual to the Saints in Scripture: And howbeit such things might seem somewhat singular in the time, and not so coherent; yet now we have grounds to apprehend, that they were often strong influences of the Lords Spirit, stirring up a lamp, as it were, into a sudden blaze. that was not to burn long in his Church. But now we shall detain you no longer, only this we may assure you of, that although these

TO THE READER.

Sermons are neither so exact, nor so full, as doubtless they would have been, if they had come from the Authors own pen; yet, as I dare say, they were studied with prayer, preached with power, and backed with success; so also if ye shal read them with consideration, meditate with prayer, and practise with diligence, ye shal never find your time nor pains ill bestowed; but shal have cause to bless the Lord for this, amongst other helps that he hath given, for making you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. That it may be blest to this end, is the earnest desire and prayer of your servants in the work of the Lord,

R. O. TRAIL.
JO. STERLING.

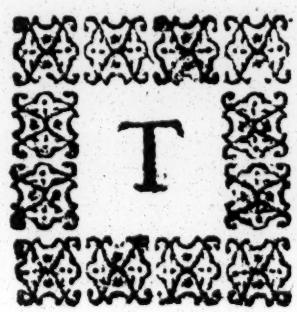
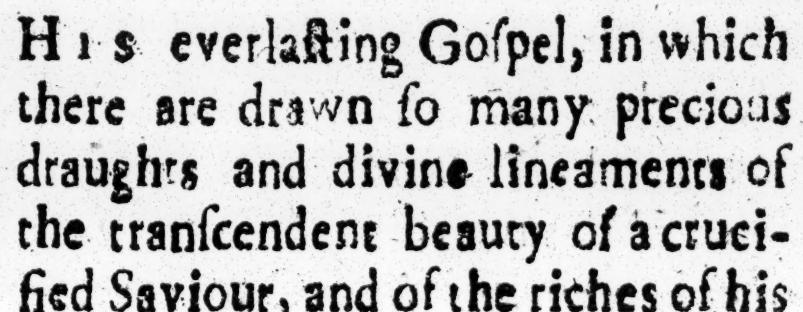
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THE MYSTERY OF FAITH OPENED UP.

SERMON I.

JOHN 3. 23. This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.

  His everlasting Gospel, in which there are drawn so many precious draughts and divine lineaments of the transcendent beauty of a crucified Saviour, and of the riches of his unsearchable grace, is a most precious and excellent thing; not only because it doth contain most absolute & sublime precepts & commands, in the exercise and obedience of which, we do not only attain unto the highest pitch in holiness; but likewise, because it containeth most rich and precious promises, in the possession and fruition of which, we are advanced to the highest pinnacle of eternal blessedness; this is clear in the grace of Faith; for what doth more purify the hearts and stamp it with the Image of the invisible God, then this

this grace of Faith? And what richer promises are annexed to any duty, then to this duty of believing to wit, everlasting life, and fruition of God; so that if we had dwelt forty dayes at the foot of Mount Sinai, and had been under the greatest discovering and condemning power of the Law, we may yet come with boldness to Mount Sion, and there embrace Jesus Christ, who is the end of the Law for righteousness to such as believe: Upon which Mount he standeth, holding forth the golden Scepter of his Peace, desiring us to embrace him, and is crying out that word in *Isai 65. 1.* *Behold me, behold me,* O may we not summon Angels, and those twenty four elders about the Throne, to help us to wonder that ever such a command as this came forth, that we should believe on the name of the Son of God, after that we had broken that first and Primitive command, *That we should not eat of the forbidden tree!* Was not this indeed to make mercy rejoice over judgement? And, O may we not wonder at the precious oath of the everlasting Covenant, whereby he hath sworn, that he delighteth not in the death of sinners? What (suppose ye) were poor Adams thoughts when at first the doctrine of free-grace, and of a crucified Christ Jesus a Savior, was preached unto him in Paradise? What a divine surprisal was this, that Heaven should have preached peace to earth, after that earth had proclaimed war against Heaven! Was not this a low step of condescendency, to behold an offended God preaching peace and good-will to a guilty sinner? What could self

self-destroying *Adā* think of these morning & first discoveries of this everlasting Covenant; Christ, as it were, in the morning of time, giving vent to that infinite love, which was resting in his bosom & precious heart before the foundation of the world was laid? We know not whether the infiniteness of his love, the eternity of his love, or the freedom of it, maketh up the greatest wonder: but sure these three joyned together, maketh up a matchless and everlasting wonder. Would any of you ask that question, what is Christ worth? We could give no answer so suitable as this; It is above all the Arithmetick of all the Angels in Heaven, and all the men on earth, to calculate his worth; all men here must be put to a divine *non plus*. This was Jobs divinity, Job 28.13. *Man knoweth not the price of wisdom*; and must not Jesus Christ, who is the precious object of faith, and wisdom of the Father, be a supereminent & excellent One, who hath that name of King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, not only engraven on his vesture (which pointeth out the conspicuousness of his Majesty) but even also upon his thighs to point out that in all his goings & motions, he prooveth himself to be higher than the Kings of the earth? And howbeit the naked proposing of the object doth not convert; yet if once our souls were admitted to behold such a sight, as Christ in his beauty and Majesty, and to be satisfied with the divine rayes of his transcendent glory, then certainly we should find a blessed necessity laid upon us of closing with him: for Christ hath a sword pre-
ceeding

ceeding out of his precious mouth, by which he doth subject & subjugat his own to himself, as well as he hath a sword girded upon his thigh, by which he judgeth and maketh war with his enemies. We confess it is not only hard, but simply impossible; to commit an hyperbole in commanding of him; his worth being always so far above our expressions, & our expressions alwayes so far beneath his worth, therefore we may be put to propose that desire unto him; *Exalt thy self, O Lord, above the Heavens.*

But now to our purpose, being at this time to discourse upon that radical and precious grace of Faith, we intend to speak of it under this twofold notion & consideration. First, we shal speak of it as it is *justifying*, or as it doth lay hold upon the righteousness of a crucified Savior, making application of the precious promises in the Covenant of free grace, which we call *justifying Faith*. And in the second place, we shal speak a little unto Faith, as it doth lay hold upon Christ's strength; for advancing the work of mortification; and doth discover the personal excellencies of Jesus Christ, by which we advance in the work of Holiness and divine conformity with God, which we call *sanctifying Faith*. However, it is not to be supposed that there are different habits of Faith; but different acts flowing from the same saving habit, laying hold and exercising themselves upon Christ indifferent respects, and for diverse ends. Now to speak upon the first, we have made choise of these words. The Apostle John in the former verse had been pointing out the precious

advanc-

advantages of the grace of Obedience, & of keeping of his Commands, that such an one hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God, & doth receive many precious returns of prayer: As likewise, that one who is exercised in the grace of Repentance, is Gods delight; which is included in this, that he doth those things that are well pleasing in his sight. And now in these words he doth, as it were, answer an objection that might be proposed about the impossibility of attaining these precious advantages, seeing his commands were so large, and that hardly could they be remembred. This he doth sweetly answer, by setting down in this one verse a short compend or breviary boch of Law & Gospel, viz. *That we should love one another, which is the compend of the Law, and that we should believe on the Name of his Son, which is the compend of the Gospel;* & by this he sheweth the Christian that there are not many things required of him for attaining these excellent advantages; but if he exercise himself in the obedience of these two comprehensive commandments, he shall find favor both with God and man. And as concerning this precious grace of Faith, we have, 1. The advantages of it implied in the words, & clear also from the scope, as no doubt all the commands have infinite advantages infolded in their bosom, which redounds to a believer, by his practising of them. And 2. the excellency of it holden forth in the words, in that it is called his command, as if he had no other command but this. And the Greek particle is here prefixed, which hath a great

great deal of emphasis and force in it, and this is his Commandment. But 3: there is this also, the absolute necessity of this grace, holden forth here in this Word, his Commandment; as if he had said by proposing of this command, I do set life and death before you, and that you would not conceive that it is an arbitrary & indifferent thing for you to believe or not; but be perswaded of this, that as an infinite advantage may constrain you to the obedience of it, so absolute necessity must perswade you to act that which is of your everlasting concernment. And lastly, ye have the precious object upon which Faith (which is justifying) doth exercise it self, and that is upon the name of the Son of God: and no doubt faith is that excellent grace which doth elevate the soul unto a sweet & inseparable union with Christ, and is that golden & precious knot that doth eternally knit the hearts of these precious friends together. Faith is that grace that draweth the first draughts of Christ's precious image on our hearts, & by love doth accomplish and perfect them. No, Faith taketh hold not only on the faithfulness of God, that he is a God of truth, & that in him there is no lie: but likewise it taketh hold on the Omnipotency of God, that he is one to whom nothing is too hard; and on the infinite mercy & love of God, that he is one who doth delight to magnify this attribute above all his works; and these are the three great pillars of justifying Faith. From the first, it answers all the objections of sense, which doth ordinarily cry forth; Doth all his promise fail for evermore? And

And that with his one word, *If he hath once purposed it, he will also do it*; and if he hath once spoken it, *he will also make it come to pass*. From the second, it answereth all these objections that may arise from carnal reason, and probability, which tendeth to the weakning of his confidence. And these do oftentimes cry out; *How can these things be?* But Faith laying hold upon the Omnipotency of God, it staggers not at the promise, but is strong in the faith giving glory to God. And it is the noble and divine exercise of this heroick grace of Faith, that these objections of reason and probability, which it cannot answer, it will lay them aside, and yet close with the promise; which was the practice of believing Abraham, who considereth not his own body being weak, nor the barrenness of Sarahs womb. As likewise it was the commendable practise of that woman, *Math. 15.* who not being able to answer the second trial of her faith from reason; yet notwithstanding, Faith made her cry out, *Have mercy on me, O Son of David.* And from the last, a Christian doth answer all the arguments of misbeliefs, which doth arise from the convictions of our unworthiness and sinfulness; which makes us oftentimes imbrace that Divinity of Peters, *Luke 5. 8. Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.* But Faith taking hold on the infinite mercy and love of Christ, it answereth all with this: *He walks not with us according to that rule of merit, but according to that precious and golden rule of love and boundless compassion.*

But before we shal speak any thing unto you of these

these things, we would a little point out some few things to be known as previous to these; we shall not dwell long in pointing out the nature of justifying Faith: It is that grace whereby a Christian being convinced of his lost estate, & of an utter impossibility to save himself, he doth flee to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and unto him who is that precious City of refuge, and there doth abide till our High Priest shall die, which shall not be for ever. Or if ye will, it is a sweet travelling of the immortal soul betwixt infinite mercy, and infinite love; betwixt an utter impossibility to save our selves, and a compleat ability in him to save to the uttermost; betwixt abounding sin, & superabounding mercy: hence Faith is often holden forth to us in Scripture under that notion of coming, *Isai. 55.1.* *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.* *Rev 22.17.* *Who soever will, let him take the water of life freely.* *Heb. 7.25.* *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him.* And we may say by the way, that if once a sinner could be brought to this, to count all his own righteousness but filthy rags, and to believe that a man is as really justified before God by imputed righteousness, as if it were by inherent holiness; surely such an one were not far from the Kingdom of God. Neither shall we stand long to point out this unto you, that it is your duty to believe; for it is clear, not only from this place, but likewise from *Isai 45.22.* *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the Earth,* *Matth. 11.28.* *Come unto me all ye that labor and*

are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. John 14.1. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. Isai. 55. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy without money, and without price. But oh! it is a great misery of many (and that which may be a subject of a perpetual lamentation) that we can neither be subject to the Law, as commanding to obey it, or as threatening to believe it: Nor to the Gospel, as promising to embrace it, and sweetly to receive it. O but that primitive temptation and delusion whereby Satan did deceive our first father, is that whereby he yet seeks to catch and delude many souls, viz. That though we eat of the forbidden fruit, & walk in the vain imaginations of our own hearts, yet he doth suggest this to us; that we shall not die, but shall once be as God; this is Satans great and deluding Divinity: And therefore to inforce this great and precious command a little further, we shall propose these considerations.

First, that the Gospel hath laid no obstruction in our way of closing with Christ, and partaking of the effects of the Gospel; but on the contrary, sheweth that the great impediment is our want of willingness, which we lay in our own way, as is clear from John 5.40. Ye will not come to me that ye may get life; as likewise from Revel. 22. 27. where the Gates of the Gospel are cast open, and whosoever will, are commanded to enter in: So that although you may farther your misbelief upon your inability, or that your spot is not the spot of his people, yet know

know that the rise and original of it is want of willingness. But to make this more clear, we would have you knowing this, that all the qualification annexed to this commandment of Faith, as that *Math. 11. 28.* speaketh out the qualifications rather of these that will come, then of all these that ought to come: Or he inviteth these that through the Spirit of discouragement and misbelief, have the greatest reluctance to come; and may not that cardinal and soul-refreshing promise, *John 6. 37.* stop the mouth of misbelief, so that it should have nothing to say? *He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out;* ye may reduce your misbelief rather to the sinfulness of your will, then to the sinfulness of your walk, and if once ye could come to the length of willingness to embrace Jesus Christ, all other objections and knots should be sweetly loosed and dissolved.

Secondly, consider that though we should pray the one half of our time, and weep the other, yet if we want this noble grace of Faith, the wrath of God shall abide on us. What are all the works of these hypocrites, & those glistering acts of Law-sanctification, but a plunging of ourselves in the ditch, Until our own cloaths abhor us? Therefore it is that after the Prophet Zachary hath made mention in the twelfth Chapter of this Prophecy, of making bitter lamentation for him whom we have pierced, as for an only son, yet in the beginning of the 13. Chapter, he maketh mention of a Fountain opened to the house of David, for sin and for uncleanness; which

which may intimate unto us, that although we have
washed our selves with our own tears, yet there is
not a particle of the blood of Christ, and that we must be
washed in that fountain even from our own righ-
-nesses, which are but as filthy rags.

Thirdly, consider that great and monstrous sin-
fulness that is in this sin of unbelief; we will strain
at a gnat, but many will easily swallow down this
Camel: We will tithe mint and annise, and fast
twice in the week, but neglect faith and love, and
judgement, which are the weightier things of the
Law. And indeed there are these things which
speak out the sinfulness of unbelief. 1. That when
the holy Ghost is sent to convince the world of sin,
John 16.9. he pitched upon this sin, as though there
were no other sin of which the World had need to
be convinced: *He will convince the world of sin, be-
cause they believe not on the Son of God:* & no doubt
there is more sinfulness in that sin, than in many
breaches of the Moral Law, it being a sin against
matchless love, and against that which is the reme-
dy of sin. 2. That it is called by way of eminency,
disobedience, as is clear from Heb. 4.11. *Lest any of
you fall under the same example of unbelief;* or as the
word may be rendered, *lest any of you fall after that
example of disobedience,* Eph. 2. 2. 3. That amongst
all these that shall be eternally excommunicate from
the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his
power, those that are guilty of this sin of unbelief,
they are put in the first place, Rev. 21. 1. And 4.
That unbelief doth contradict & deny these three
precious

precious and cardinal attributes of God. 1. Doth not unbelief contradict his faithfulness, and make him a liar? 1 John 5.10. 2. Doth it not contradict the infiniteness of his power? And 3. the infiniteness of his love, and supposest that there is something too hard for him which his power cannot reach, nor his infinite love overcome? We may reduce many of our questions and disputings of his good will to this original, *viz.* to the disputing of his power. No doubt, if we belong to him, we shall once sing that note of lamentation over our unbelief, *This is our infirmity, for changes are from the right hand of the most High.*

And lastly, to inforce this precious command of Faith, consider that it is his command which speaketh forth this, that we must not take an indulgence or dispensation to our selves to believe, or not to believe at our pleasure: and is it not a strange thing that Christians are less convinced of the breaches of the Commandment of Faith, than of other commands? They think misbelief to be but a *Zoar*, a little sin; and it proceedeth either from this, that the convictions of other sins (as the neglect of prayer, or the sin of swearing, or committing adultery) do arise from a natural conscience; for there is somewhat of natures light to make us abominate and hate them; when y^e the light of nature will not lead us, to the convictions of the sinfulness of misbelief, it being a Gospel & more spiritual sin. Or it proceedeth from this, that unbelief doth ordinarily pass vail'd under the vizard of some refined virtue,

other's humility and tenderness, though that rather it
may be said, that it is pride and ignorance, cloath-
ed with the garments of humility. And no doubt,
Christ doth account obedience to this command-
ment of Faith, the greatest act of humility, as is
not clear from Rom. 10. 3. where it is called submiss-
ion; they submitted not to the righteousness of God.
Or else it proceedeth from this, that we conceive
of that the commandment of Faith is not of so large
an extent as other commands, and so doth not bind us
to the obedience of it; but know this, that it shall be
the condemnation of the world, that they have not
believed on the Name of the Son of God; and no
doubt but it is Satans great design and cardinal pro-
ject, to keep us back from obedience to the com-
mandment of faith, & that we should not liftē to the
precious promises of this everlasting Gospel, but
should reject the counsel of God against our selves,
and refuse his precious and divine call.

The second previous consideration that we would
give, shall be to show you what are the causes that
there is so much disputing of our interest, & so lit-
tle believing; that we are unstable as water, mar-
ring our own excellency, spending so much of our
time in walking under a cloud, and are so seldom
admitted to read our names in these precious and
eternal records of Heaven. No doubt, these things
have influence upon it, viz. 1. That we are more
judging of God by his dispensations, then by his
Word, supposing ever the change of dispensations to
speak for the change of our state; this is misbelief

Divinity, that when sense cannot read love in his face, but he appeareth to frown, and to cast a cloud over it, then it is presumption (saith sense) to read a love in his heart, or in his Word; but know it was a self-denying practice of believing Job, to cry out, *Though he should kill me, I will believe in him:* therefore make not dispensations your Bible; otherwise ye will stumble at the noon tide of the day, & shall have in your way; knew you never what such a thing as this meant, to ascend in overcoming thoughts of his love, notwithstanding anything that his dispensations might preach? We conceive, that if the eyes of our faith were opened, we might see infinite love engraven on the darkest acts, and most dismal-like dispensations of his to us, though it be often-times written in dark and dim characters to sense.

2. There is this likewise which hath influence upon our so much disputing and misbelieving, viz. a guilty conscience, and the entertainment of some predominant lust, which oftentimes occasioneth our walking in darkness, and having no light. This is clear from 1 Tim. 1. 19. where that precious jewel of Faith can be holden in no other place but in a pure conscience, that is that Royal place wherein it must dwel; and no doubt, if once we make shipwrack of a good conscience, we will erre concerning our Faith. A bosom-Idol when it is entertained, doth exceedingly mar the vigorous exercises of these graces, which are evidences of our faith; and certainly Grace rather in its degrees, than in its sincerity, or simple being only, is that which giveth

haveth the clear evidence of Faith. Therefore when we find not love in its high and eminent acts, we hardly win to make it any clearly-concluding demonstration of our Faith.

3. As likewise a bosom idol when it is entertained, maketh us to lose much of our high esteem & reputation of Jesus Christ, which doth exceedingly interrupt the sweet and precious acts of faith. For it is certain, that if once the immortal soul be united to Jesus Christ by the bond of love and respect, then our faith will increase with the increase of God, Our entertainment of a bosom idol is ordinarily punished with the want of the sensible intimations of his peace, and of our interest in him: so that sometimes his own are constrained to cry out; *God hath departed from me, and he answereth me not, neither by dreams nor visions.*

4. There is that likewise that hath influence upon it, our not closing absolutely with Jesus Christ, but upon conditions and suppositions. We make not an absolute and blank resignation of our selves over to Christ, to hold fast the Covenant, notwithstanding he should dispense both bitter and sad things to us? but we conceive that Christs Covenant with believers, is like that Covenant that God made with Noah, that there should be Summer and Winter, seed time and harvest, night and day unto a Christian. A Christian must have his night as well as his day: he must once sow in tears, before he reap in joy: he must once go forth, bearing his precious seed, before he can return bearing his

sheaves in his bosom : and that this hath influence upon our instability , may be seen from this , that often a Christian after his first closing with Christ, he meeteth with desertion in point of tenderness, in point of joy, and in point of strength, so that his corruption seems now to be awaked more then formerly , that he wants those seeming enjoyments of him which formerly he had : and that much of his softness of his heart hath now evanished , which is clear somewhat from *Heb. 10. 32.* *And after they were enlightened, they endured a great fight of afflictions.* For the word that is there rendered afflictions, signifieth inward troubles through the motions of sin, as well as outward afflictions, *Gal. 5. 24.* And God useth to dispense this way to his own, not only to take tryal of the sincerity of your closing with him, but to make our Faith more stedfast and sure. And no doubt, if we close not absolutely with Christ (when under these temptations and tryals) we will reject our confidence as a delusion, and suppose it to be but a morning dream : therefore it were a noble and divine practise of a Christian , to close with Christ without reservation, seeing he doth dispense nothing but that which might tend to our advantage. And we would say to such as are under these temptations, that if ye endeavor to resist them, it is the most compendious and excellent way to make your hearts, which now are *dying as a stone*, to be as a *watered garden*, & *springs of water*, whose waters fail not , and to make you strong as a *Lyon*, so that no temptation can rouse you up ; but ye shall be enabled

enable to tread upon the high places of the earth, and to sing songs of triumph over our idols.

5. There is this likewise which hath influence on it, our building of our Faith more upon sense then upon Christ or his word; and therefore it is that Faith is so unconstant and changeable as the Moon, we not knowing what such a thing means; *To hope against hope, and to be strong in Faith, giving glory to God.* And we would only say unto you that erect your confidence upon so sandy a foundation, that when the wind and storm of temptation shal blow, that house shal fall to the ground. As likewise, building of your Faith upon sense, doth not abate much of your joy, and much of your precious esteem of Jesus Christ: It being Faith exercising it self upon an invisible object, that maketh the Christian to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. 1. 8.

6. There is this last that hath influence upon it, even our slothfulness in the exercise of our spiritual duties, by which Faith should be entertained. Faith is a tender grace, and a plant that must not be rusted, but nourished through the sap of other precious graces: but we grow remiss in our spiritual duties, and do turn our selves upon the bed of security, as the door upon the hinges. And doth not our drowsiness cloath us with rags, and make us fall into a deep sleep, while as, if we were diligent, our souls should be made fat and rich? Yea, slothfulness doth not only imped assurance of this, that it hindereth the divine communications of his love and

respect, by which assurance may be kept in life, Cant. 5.2. but also, it maketh our poverty come on us as an armed man, and our want as one that travelleth. And withal it letteth loose the chain by which our corruptions are tyed, and maketh them to lift up their head, by which our assurance is much darkned and impaired, and our hope is much converted into diffidence and despair. And we would only say this, it is the diligent Christian that is the believing Christian; and it is the believing Christian that is the diligent Christian: there being such a sweet reciprocation betwixt these two precious graces, that they die and live together.

Now thirdly, we shal shut up our discours with this, in pointing out a little what are those things that do obstruct a Christians closing with Christ, and believing in his precious Name.

I. We conceive that this woful evil doth spring and rise from that fundamental ignorance of this truth, that there is a God, as is clear from Heb. 11.6. where that is required as a qualification of a Comer, *That he should believe that God is*: and assuredly, till once this precious truth be imprinted upon our souls, *as with a pen of iron, and point of a diamond*, we will look upon the Gospel as an Utopian fancy, and a deluding notion, to teach unstable souls, who know not the way to attain unto real blessedness. And truly it is a fault of many, that they begin to dispute their being in Christ, before they know there is a Christ; and do dispute their interest in him before they believe his being, and that

that there is such an one as is called Christ.

II. Our coming unto Christ is obstructed from the want of the real and spiritual convictions of our desperate and lost estate without Jesus Christ, and that our unspeakable misery is the want of him : which is clear from *Jer. 2. 31.* *We are Lords, we will come no more to thee.* And it is evident from *Revel. 3. 16. 18.* that such a delusion as this doth overtake many , that they can reign as Kings without Jesus Christ ; and that they can build their happiness, and establish their carnal felicity upon another foundation : But, O that we could once win to this, to believe what we are without Christ, and to believe what we shal be in the enjoyment of him : with the one eye to descend and look upon these deep draughts , that the mystery of iniquity hath imprinted upon our immortal souls ; and withal, to reflect upon the wages of sin, which is death, and be constrained to cry out, *Wo is me, for I am undone :* and with the other eye , to ascend and look to that help that is laid upon one that is mighty, and to make use of the righteousness of a crucified Savior , that so what we want in our selves, we may get it abundantly made up in him.

III. There is this likewise that obstructeth our closing with Christ , our too much addictedness to the pleasures and carnal delights of a passing world, which is clear from *Luke 14. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22 Mat. 22. 5. 6.* where those that are invited to come to the feast of this Gospel , they do make their Apologie, and with one consent do refuse it, some preceending

on impossibility to come, and some pretending an unavoidable inconveniency in coming. And, O! what a ridiculous thing is that poor complement that those deluded sinners used to Christ, *I pray you, have us excused?* And is not the world the great plea and argument that they make use of, when they will not come and make use of Christ.

IV. There is this lastly, which doth obstruct ones coming to Christ, their unwillingness to be denied to their own righteousness, which is clear from Rom. 10. 23. & we conceive, if once these two were believed (which are the great Tropicks, out of which all these arguments may be brought, to persuade you to imbrace Christ) to wit, the infinite excellency of his Person on whom we are to believe, & the infinite loss that those do sustain who shall be eternally rejected of him: we might be preswaded to entertain a divine abstractedness, & holy retirement from all things that are here below, and to pitch our desires alone upon him, who is the everlasting wonder of Angels, and the glory of the higher House. O! did we once suppose the unspeakable happiness of those whose Faith is now advanced unto everlasting felicity & fruition, and hath entered into that eternal possession of the promises, might not we be constrained to cry out, *It is good for us once to be there?* Christ weepeth to us in the Law, but we do not lament; & he pipeth unto us in the Gospel, but we do not dance: he is willing to draw us with the cords of men, and with the bonds of love, and yet we will not have him to reign over us.

May

g ad May not Angels laugh at our folly, that we should
 O! so undervalue this Prince of love, and should con-
 cern remn him who is holden in so high esteem & rever-
 erance in these two great assemblies that are above
 ear of Angels, and of the souls of just men made per-
 fect? Christ hath now given us the first and sec-
 ond summons: the day is approaching when the
 sad and woful summons shal be sent against us, of
 departing from him into those everlasting flames, out
 of which there is no redemption: and this shal be
 the cap-stone of our misery, that we had once life
 in our offer, but did refuse it: And though there
 were four gates standing open toward the North,
 by which we might have entered into that everla-
 sting rest, yet we choos'd rather to walk in the paths
 that lead down to death, and take hold of the cham-
 bers of hell. O! but there are many that think the
 Gospel cunningly devised fables and foolishness,
 (they being unwilling to believe that which sense
 cannot comprehend, nor reason reach) and this is
 the ground why the Gospel is not embraced, but is
 rejected as an humane invention, and as a morning
 dream, &c.

S E R M O N II.

JOHN 3. 23. This is his Commandment, that ye
 should believe on the Name of his son Jesus
 Christ, &c.

There are three great and cardinal mysteries,
 in the unfolding of which, all a Christians

time ought to be spent. First, there is that precious and everlasting mystery of Christ's love and condescendency, which those intellectual Spirits the Angels, are not able fully to comprehend. Secondly, there is that woful mystery of the desperate deceitfulness and wickedness of the heart, which no man was ever yet able to fathom and comprehend. And thirdly, there is that precious mystery of that eternal felicity and blessedness that is purchased unto the Saints, that once they shal reign with Christ, not a thousand years only, but throughout all the ages of everlasting & endless eternity: so that there is this difference betwixt this garden of everlasting delights, that Christ hath purchased to the Saints, and that first Paradise and Eden wherein man was placed. There was a secret gate in the first, thorow which a man that had once entered in, must go out again: But in the second and precious Eden, there is no access in going out; and all that is to be known of these three mysteries, is much comprehended in this, to know that they cannot fully be known. Paul was a blessed proficient in the study of the first mystery, and had almost attained to the highest class of knowledge, and yet he is constrained to profess himself to be ignorant of this. Hence is that word, Ephes. 3. 19. *That ye may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.* And is it not a mysterious command, to desire people to know that which cannot be known? The meaning whereof we conceive to be this in part, that Paul pressed this upon them, that they should study to know that this mystery

ystery of Christ's love could not be known. Jeremiah was a blessed proficient in the knowledge and study of the second mystery; he had some morning and twi-light discoveries of that; and yet though in some measure he had fathomed that deep, yet he is constrained to cry out, chap. 17. vers 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* And indeed that which Solomon saith of Kings, *Prov. 25. 3.* may well be said of all men, in this respect: *The Heavens for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of man are unsearchable.* The Apostle Paul also was a blessed proficient in the study of the third mystery, having some morning and twi-light discoveries of that promised rest, and was once caught up to the third heavens, and yet when he is beginning to speak of it, *1. Cor. 2. 9.* he declareth all men to be ignorant of the knowledge of this profound mystery of man's blessedness, and cryeth out; *Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* And if there be any thing further to be known in these mysteries, the grace of Faith is found worthy amongst all the graces of the Spirit, to open the seven seals of the great depths of God. Is not the grace of Faith, that whereby a Christian doth take up the invisible excellency and virtue of a dying Christ? Is not Faith that precious grace by which a Christian must take up the spots and blemishes that are within himself? And is not the grace of Faith, that precious grace that placeth a

Christian upon the top of mount Pisga ; and there letteh him see a sight of the promised Land ; and doth open a door in heaven, thorow which a Christian is admitted to see Christ sitting upon his Throne ? And faith hath not only a kind of Omnipotency, as is clear , that all things are possible to them that believe ; but it hath a kind of Omniscience, and all knowledge, that it can take up and comprehend all the greatest mysteries of Heaven , according to that word , Prov. 28. 5. He that seeketh the Lord shall understand all things: As if he had said, there is nothing dark to a believирg Christian , as there is nothing impossible to a believing Christian. As likewise Faith is that grace that must take aside the vail that is spread over the face of a crucified Christ : and Faith is that precious Spy that goeth forth , and taketh up these wonderful excellencies that are in him. The grace of Love , as it were, is born blind, and it hath nothing wherewith to solace it self , but that which is presented unto it by this noble and excellent grace of Faith.

Now before we shal speak any thing to these things that we did propose to speak of at last occasion, we shal yet speak a little unto some things which are necessary to be known for the distinct up-taking of the nature of justifying Faith, which is the great commandment of this everlasting Gospel ; and that which we would first speak to , shall be this : What is the reason and ground that the Gospel conveyance of righteousness and life (and of the excellent things of this everlasting Covenant)

should

should be thorow the exercise of the grace of Faith, for it is not said in the Scripture that Repentance justifieth, that Love justifieth, or that Mortification justifieth; but it is Faith only that justifieth, and it is Faith by which a Christian inheriteth the promises? So that is clear that Faith is that conduit-pipe thorow which are conveyed to us the great blessings of this everlasting Covenant.

I. And the first ground of it is this, it is thorow Faith, that all our blessing may be known to be by love, and by free and unsearchable grace, as is clear, Rom. 4. 16. while the Apostle is giving a reason why the inheritance is conveyed to a Christian through Faith: *It is of Faith*, saith he, *that it might be of grace*; for if the inheritance were conveyed to a Christian thorow a covenant of works then these spotlesse draughts of infinite love, and of unsearchable grace, should not be written on our inheritance, as it is clear, Rom. 4. 25. And it is that great design of Christ to make his grace conspicuous, in conveying salvation to us through Faith.

II. There is this second ground likewise of it, that all the promises and blessings of this everlasting Covenant might be sure and stedfast to us; therefore they are conveyed to us through the exercise of the grace of Faith, as is clear, Rom 4. 16. *They are of Faith*, saith he, *that they might be sure*: or as the word is, *that they might be settled*. When the promises of life and of eternal salvation were conveyed to us through mans obedience, were they not then most uncertain and unstable? But is not

heaven

Heaven your everlasting crown now, stedfast unto you, seeing ye have that golden pillar of Christ's everlasting righteousness, to be the foundation of your Faith, and the strength of your confidence in the day of need.

III. There is this third ground why the promises & excellent things of this Gospel are conveyed to a Christian through the exercise of Faith, that all boasting and gloriation might be excluded, according to that word, Rom. 3. 27. *By what law is boasting excluded? Not by the law of works, but by the law of faith.* And certainly, seeing Christians have all the great things of heaven conveyed to them through the exercise of Faith, think ye not that this shal be your first song when ye shal be within the gates of that new Jerusalem: *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory of our salvation.* O what a precious dignity were it but for an half hour, to be admittid to hear those spotless songs that are sung by those thousand times ten thousand, & thousands of thousands of holy angels that are round about this throne! Doth not David, that sweet singer of Israel, now sing more sweetly then he did while he was here below? Doth not deserted Haman now chant forth the praises and everlasting songs of him that sitteth upon the Throne? And doth not afflicted Job now sing sweetly after his captivity is reduced, and he entered within that Land where the voice of joy and gladness is continually heard? Would ye have a description of heaven? I could give it no term so suitable as this, Heaven;

into is a rest, without a rest: for though there remain
ists a rest for the righteous, yet Rev. 4. 8. These four
n of beasts that stand before the Throne, they rest not night-
nce nor day, crying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God
Almighty; yet there is much divine quietness in
that holy unquietness that is above.

IV. There is this last ground, why the blessings
of the Gospel, and life and righteousness are con-
veyed to us through the exercise of Faith, that the
way to attain to these things might be pleasant and
easie? We are certainly perswaded that the way
of winning to heaven by a covenant of works, was
much more unpleasant and difficult; but it is not
an easie way of entring into the Holy of Holies, to
win unto it through the exercise of Faith. Are not
all wisdoms wayes pleasantness? And are not all her
paths peace? Was not that just self-denial in one
that laid, he would not take up a Crown though it
were lying at his foot. But, oh! that cursed self-de-
nial doth possess the breasts of many, so that though
that Crown of immortal glory and eternal blessed-
ness be lying at your feet, yet ye will not imbrace
it, nor take it up: Is not the hatred of many to
Christ, covered with deceit? And therefore your
iniquity shal be declared before the Congregation.

Now that what we have spoken upon this
might be more clear, and that the nature of justi-
fying Faith be not mistaken, we would have you
take notice of these things.

1. That the grace of Faith doth not justify a
Christian as it is a work, or because of any inherent
excel-

excellency and dignity that is in this grace above any other graces of the Spirit; but faith doth alone justifie a Christian, instrumentally and objectively; that is, it is that by which a Christian is just, by laying hold on the precious object of it, the righteousness of Christ. And to clear this, we would only have you knowing this, that faith doth justifie as it closeth with Christ; but not because it closes with Christ, which some vainly are bold to assert, because there is not any dignity or worth in the act of Faith, inclosing with Christ, that can be the foundation of our justification; else it were to confound that precious degree of free grace.

2. There is this that we world have you all knowing that faith is not the instrument of justification (as justification is taken in an active sense) though it is the instrument of justification. as it is taken in a passive sense; & the ground of this conclusio is this, because it is impossible that any actio in man can be an instrument of any action in God, and therefore that phrase that you have so ordinarily spoken of, that faith justifieth, it is thus to be resolved, that we are justified by faith.

3. There is this that we would have you knowing, that betwixt a Christians cloſſing by Faith with the righteousnesse of Jesus Christ & the justification of a sinner: I say, there is no natural & indispensable connexion between these two; but only there is a connexion of divine appointment, & of free grace; though we once conceive there is a natural aptitude in the grace of Faith to lay hold on

the righteousness of Christ, more then there is in any other grace of the Spirit, as ye may see there is a more natural aptitude and fitness in the hand to receive then in any other organ of the body.

4. There is this also that we would have you knowing, that a Christian in his first closing with Christ, Christ (considered as crucified) is the immediate object of his Faith, and not Christ considered in his personal excellencies. Hence it is often in Scripture, that Christ as crucified, is holden forth as the immediate obj. & of justifying Faith; as is clear, Rom 3. 5. 24 25. And the ground of this assertion is this, because that it is the formal object of justifying Faith which doth formerly justify the sinners, and on which Faith doth immediately lay hold, as a ransome to satisfy Justice, and as a righteousness in which the soul dare venture to be found, when it shall stand before the Judgement Seat of God: and certainly this is Christ, as obedient to the death of the cross. And it is likewise clear, that the thing which doth engage the soul to Christ, is not only because he is good in himself, but because he is good to us.

5. And there is this lastly, that we would have you knowing, that though Faith doth alone justify yet Faith doth not justify being alone. Hence is that which we have often in Schools, *Fides justificat solum; licet non solitaria;* that Faith justifieth alone, though not being alone, as James doth spek *Faith without works is dead, and is of no effect.*

Now that which secondly we shal speak to, shal be

be this, to point out to you some differences betwixt justifying Faith which is in a real believer, and temporary Faith which is in an hypocrite, and one that is destitute of that everlasting hope, though he do pretend to have it.

And first, that there is such a thing as temporary Faith, as is clear from Luke 8. 13. it is said there of some, that they believed for a season; yea, in Acts 1. 13. it is said of *Simon Magus* (who was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity) he believed. And thole in John 2.23. When they did behold the miracles, they believed on Jesus Christ; and yet we conceive that their Faith was not sincere, and lo this was not saving faith. And indeed ye may see a difference betwixt these two in the very name temporary; for this is such a faith as doth not continue long with him that hath it, but doth evanish and pass away: for as this is certain, that an hypocrite will not always call upon God, Job 27. 10. so that is also certain, that an hypocrite will not always believe in God. I tell you, that the longest time an hypocrite doth keep his faith, Job hath set down in his 18. chapter, vers. 14. Their hope, faith he, shall bring them to the King of terrors, and then it shall be rooted out of them and their tabernacle; their faith will bring them no further then the gates of death, and then their faith will flee away as a dream, and evanish as a vision of the night.

II. There is this difference likewise betwixt them, that temporary faith it closeth with Christ as a Savior, and for righteousness; but it closeth not with

with Christ as a Prince, and for sanctification: but justifying faith taketh Christ as well for a Prince, as it taketh him for a Savior: and if Solomon did discern who was the true mother of the child, by that that she who would have had the child divided, was not the mother of the child; so we may say, that they who would divide Christ in his Offices, it is an evidence that they are not amongst those who are actually made partakers of the adoption of children: there is some what of this pointed at in John 6.65. where that which made many who were his Disciples (and did once believe) desert him, was because of the hardness of his command. This is an hard saying, who can hear it? And it is certain that it is a greater difficulty for a Christian to take Christ as a Prince, then as a Savior, for by that he must make an absolute resignation of himself over to Christ, never to be reduced. O! when saw you such a sight of Christ, that ye were constrained to cry out (without a complement) to him: Truly, I am thy servant, I am thy servant. O! were ye never ravished with one of his eyes, nor overtaken with one chain of his neck? Believe me, they who see him thus, do believe that his commands are grievous.

III. There is this difference, that temporary faith is attained unto without the exercile of the Law; but justifying faith is not attained to without some measure of the exercile of the Law: this is clear, Mark 4. 5. where speaking of these temporary believers, it is said of them, That the fruit did

imme-

immediately spring up, &c. Are there not some (it may be here) who think they do believe, and yet were never in any measure trembling under the discovering & condemning power of the Law? Is not that a mystery, that one should bring forth without travelling? And is not this a mystery in Christianity, that one should believe before he hath found the pangs of the New birth? I am afraid of this, that many of us have taken up our Religion at our foot; for there are many who take up Religion, before Religion take them up. But would you know the properties of a Christians Faith? It is a begotten faith, 1 Pet. 1. 2. and not a Faith that is taken up at our pleasure. And I would only say these two things to you, be perswaded of this, that hypocrisy may be span with a very small thred, so that the most discerning Christian cannot take up that desperate enmity that is in them. How long did Judas lurk under the name of a Saint, even with those that were most discerning? And there is this that we would say, that amongst all these that shall be eternally excommunicate from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, hypocrites in Zion shall have the bitterest cup of divine indignation presented unto them. Hence it is that Christ when he would tell the worst company that one shall have in hell, it is always this, ye shall go to that place where hypocrites and sinners are; and so it would be of your concernment, that by the candle of the Lord ye would search the inward part of the belly, before ye go down to the grave with a lie in your

in your right hand, a deceiving heart having turned you
ye^r aside. We confess, it is sad to consider those anxious
he disappointments that many in these days shall once
Is meet with.

h. IV. But there is this last difference betwixt ju-
i. stifying Faith and temporary Faith, that there are
th three precious effects of justifying Faith, which a
of temporary believer cannot win to.

1. To be denied to all his enjoyments and at-
tainments, and to walk humbly under them; for we
may say that it is impossible for an hypocrite to be
denied to his enjoyments, he maketh such a Deity
of them, and worships them, or rather he worship-
peth himself in them. There are three great Graces
that an hypocrite doth pursue after (though he ra-
ther seeketh them as gifts, then as Graces) know-
ledge, prayer, and humility: And though it be
but little, he can attain of any of the three, (or ra-
ther nothing, in a saving way) yet least of all can
he attain to the last; yea, we may judge that there
is always within his bosom a standing conviction,
that he could never win unto that gracious Grace
of Humility. O! could ye never win to this, to
count your own righteousness as filthy rags, and
to rejoice alone in the righteousness of a crucified
Savior? I would press this upon you by the way
(O Christians of this generation) forget your
perfections, and remember your imperfections: have
an holy oblivion of your attainments, but
have a divine remembrance of your short-co-
mings: look more to what is before unperfected,
then

then to what is behind, and thus shal you evidence true justifying Faith.

2. It is an effect of justifying Faith, to be under some constant and divine impression of the preciousness of Jesus Christ, according to that word, 1 Pet. 2 7. *To you who believe, Christ is precious.* It is not said, that Christ was precious, or shal be precious; but it is said, *he is precious*, which doth import (as we use to speak) a continued act. Did ye never know what it was to dwell twenty four hours under the impression of the matchless excellency, and precious worth of a crucified Savior? I will pose you with this; Are there not some here (and else where) that pass under the notion of Saints, that never knew what it was to dwell half an hour under these high and elevating thoughts of the preciousness of Jesus Christ? So that we profess we cannot tell whether we shal call him precious or undervalued; but we may conjoin these two together, that *he is a precious, and yet undervalued Christ.*

3. By justifying Faith, a Christian winneth to mortification of his invisible & predominant lusts, which is impossible for a temporary believer to win to. And is there not a great difference betwixt an Idol when it is cast out, and an Idol when it but goeth out? I will tell you the great mortification of hypocrites, the devil was living in them as one that was a black one, and now he cometh again and transformeth himself into an Angel of light. He was living in them before by his spirit of prophaney, and now he liveth in them by the spirit of hypo-

hypocrisy, and counte feiting of those things that were never clear attainments, while it is the noble dignity of Faith, *Acts 15. 9.* to purifie the heart: but are there not many here who never knew what it was to mortify one lust for Christ? Can such a delusion overtake you, O Atheists! that ye shall reign with Christ, if ye die not with him? There is an opinion vented in these dayes, that there may be repentance in heaven; & I think it would seem that the Christians of this age have much of that opinion, we are so little in repentance while we are here below: but know that Faith and Sanctification are two inseparable companions: And let me tell you, if you will know the compend of the precious exercise of Faith, it is this: Faith hath three great things that it perpetually contemplates and views. 1. Faith looketh to the promise, and there it doth rejoice and rest upon it. 2. Faith looketh to the duties that are commanded, and there it cryeth out: *Here am I, I will obey and hearken unto the voyce of the Word.* And 3. Faith looketh to the crown, and there it doth exult and sweetly rejoice in divine expectation. And O what a sight is that, to behold that everlasting Prince standing at the end of our race, having a crown in his right hand, with this Motto engraven on it, *He that persevereth to the end, shal be saved!* And what a Faith, suppose ye, it shall be thought, when we shall get on that immortal crown of blessedness? What think ye is the exercise of those that are above? O Heaven! Heaven! if we did know it! would we not be in

an holy extasie of desire, till we were there? And blessed be he eternally, that hath purchased this precious felicitie to us.

Now we shal at this time shut up our discourse in by speaking a little to those things in which a Christian doth ordinarily meet with assurâce of this interest in God, and is put to the divine actings of the Grace of Faith; for there are some sealing times to a Christian.

I. The first time of the sealing is, after the mortification of some predominant lust and Idol; then they are admitted to read their names in the precious and ancient records of Heaven, and to see in these books their unworthy names written by the hand of that everlasting Prince. This is clear Rev.2.17. *To him that overcometh wil I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knows saving he that receiveth it.* And from that 2 Tim. 4. 8. Believe me more mortification would make more believing; but would ye know the original of misbeliefs? It is the want of exercise of spiritual mortification of our lusts. I know not where the most part of us intendeth to lodge at night, but this is certain, that we live with much contentment with our lusts, and these predominant Idols that do so much possess us.

II. It is secondly, a sealing time to a Christian when he is admitted to the divine enjoyment of these satisfying delights that are to be found in Christ: When was it that the Spouse cryed out so often, *My beloved is mine, and I am his?* Was it

not

and not when she was brought to the banqueting and his manner over her was love? Believe me, more communion with an absent Christ would make more intimation (in a divine manner) of our peace with him. We desire to bless those that are above the reach of all these disputings and questions that we are so much subject unto.

III. This is a sealing time to a Christian, when he is much in the exercise of secret Prayer, and of much conversing, and corresponding with God in that duty, as is clear in that word from Dan. 2. 21. When Daniel was praying at the evening oblation, in the 23 verse, he meets with a divine intimation of his peace with God; *O man, greatly beloved of God, as the Original hath it, O man of great desires;* for he was desireable indeed, and precious to him who holdeth the Saints in his right hand.

IV. This is also a sealing time to a Christian, when he is called to the exercise of some great work, and is to be put upon some eminent holy imployment; this is clear, Jer. 1. 5. where Jeremiah being called to preach the Gospel unto such a rebellious people, then he hath his eternal election declared unto him: *Before thou wast formed in the womb, I knew thee. Christ, as it were, giveth them that, to be meat to them for fourty dayes, and that in the Strength of it, they may go many a dayes journey.*

V. There is also another sealing time, when a Christian is first begotten to a precious and everlasting hope; for when at first Christians begin to be

acquain-

acquainted with Christ, even then sometimes declareth to them his boundless & everlasting love. And this is the ground why some of those who are but babes in Christ, are so much in the exercise of diligence, so much in the exercise of the grace of love, and so much in the exercise of the grace of tenderness; it is even because of the solemn impression of their interest in Christ, that, as it were, they are daily taken into read their own names in legible letters in the lambs book of life.

VI. And there is that last time, that is a sealing time to a Christian, and that is, when he is put under some sad and afflicting dispensation: *Where the furnace is hot seven times more than ordinary.* Then doth God condescend to manifest himself to his own. When was it that John met with most of the revelations of heaven? Was it not when he was in the Isle of Patmos, for the testimony of Jesus Christ his Kingdom, and patience of our blessed Lord? Rev. 1. 9. And that place, 2 Cor. 4. 11. Though our outward man decay; yet our inward man is renewed day by day.

Now we would press you to be more serious in the exercise of this precious grace. And I shall tell you the compend of Christianity in these few words.

1. By faith to solace yourselves in Christ's invisible virtues and excellencies. And 2. by hope, to viewing that precious crown, and those everlasting dignities that are to be given to the Saints. And 3. by mortification, to be crucifying your idols. And 4. by patience, to be possessing your souls, until

so once ye shall pass through that dark land, to the valley of everlasting delight. And as for those that contemn and undervalue the blood of this everlasting Covenant (and I would have all those that delight not in closing with Christ, and those who have not misbeliefs, as their cross, to consider this) The wrath of the living and eternal God doth abide upon them who do not believe; according to that word, John 3. 36. *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.* It is a remarkable phrase; because of this the wrath of God will not be a pilgrim to a misbeliever, that will turn aside to carry but for a night; but the wrath of God (to them who will not believe) shall be their household companion, and shall dwell with them: And wo, wo to them eternally, who have this sad and everlasting companion to abide with them, the wrath of a living God. There is one thing we would have those knowing, that amongst all those who are eternally to be debarred from Jesus Christ, misbelievers are put in the foremost rank, Revel. 21. 8. There he is to put away the the fearfull and unbelieving. And from 2 Thess. 1. 18. *When Christ shall come from Heaven with ten thousand of his saints: What to do? It is even to execute vengeance on those that obey not the truth of the Gospel.* That is, who do not believe: and I pose your own hearts with this, whether or not your names be written there in that roll, amongst those who shall be cut off? And that word, 2 Thess. 2. 12. *That they might be damned who believed not, but took pleasure in unrighteousness.* O but the wrath of a

dying Christ, and of a crucified Saviour, is dreadful ! It is more sad and terrible then the wrath God should have been, if Christ had not died. I will tell you (O hypocrites in Zion) the worst news that ever was published in your ears, and is this, Christ died and rose again, and to them that are begotten to a lively hope, they are glorying of great joy, and therein they may comfort themselves; but ye may wear a rough garment to deceive, and go to heaven in your own apprehensions? but, O the sad disappointments that is waiting on many such. And to close with this, we would obtest you, as you would answer to your terrible and dreadful Judge, that shal stand on day upon his Throne, which he shal fix in the clouds; we obtest you by all the joyes of heaven and we obtest you by all the everlasting pains of hell, and we obtest you by all the curses that are written in the volume of this book, and by all the sweet and comfortable promises that are in the everlasting Gospel; and by the love that ye own to your immortal souls; and as you would not crucifie Christ afresh, believe and embrace the offers which are presented now unto you. Know ye whether or not this shall be the last summons that you shal get to believe? That if ye do reject it, Christ shal come from heaven and pronounce that sad and lamentable Sentence to you, Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not. Now to him that can bless these things unto you we desire to give praise.

SERMON III.

JOHN 3. 23. This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his son Jesus Christ, &c.

IT was a command that Solomon gave unto his son, Prov. 22. 26. That he should not be surety for debt, nor be one of those that striketh hands. But, O! what spotless breaches of that command hath our blessed Lord Jesus committed, when he did condescend to be surety for our debt, and to pay that which was impossible for us to satisfy? Hath not Christ made a precious exchange with sinners? He wretched about his own precious neck, that bond and yoke of our iniquities, and hath given to us that unwearable, easie and portable yoke of his commandments, amongst which this is one, *That we should believe on him*: spotless Christ was made sin for us; that sinful, we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And is not this the conaemnation of the World, that we will not believe on him? That we will not delight our selves in loving of him? And I would say this to you, that though ye should weep the one half of your dayes, and pray the other half, yet if ye want this noble grace of Faith, your righteousness shall be but like a monstrous cloath, and filthy rags before him. For what is praying without believing, but a taking of his blessed Name in vain? What is our conferring upon the most divine and precious truths of God without believing?

it is not a lying to the Holy Ghost, and a flattery of God with our mouth? And we would have you knowing this, that there is a sweet harmony that is now made up betwixt Moses and Christ, betwixt the Law and the Gospel. The Law bringeth us to Christ as a Savior, and Christ bringeth us back again to the Law, to be a rule of our walk, to which we must subject our selves. So then, would ye know the compend of a Christians walk? *It is a sweet travelling betwixt Mount Sinai, and Mount Sion, betwixt Moses and Christ, betwixt the Law and the Gospel.* And we conceive, that the more deep that the exercise of the Law be in a Christians conscience, before his closing with Christ, there is so much the more precious and excellent advantages waiting for him.

I. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law, that it is the way to win to much establishment in Faith, when once we begin to close with Christ. O Christians! would ye know that which maketh the superstructure and building of grace to be within you, as a bowing will, and as a tottering fence? (of that oftentimes ye are in hazard to raze the foundation) it is this, ye were not under the exercise of the Law before your believing in Jesus Christ. There are some who do not abide three days at Mount *Sinai*, and these shall not dwell many days at Mount *Sion*.

II. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law, it maketh Christ pre-

precious to a mans sou'. What is that which filleth the soul of a Christian with many high and excellent thoughts of Christ? Is it not this, to have the Law registering our Bond, and putting us (as we use to speak) to the Horn? That is, to have the Law cursing us, and using the sentence of condemnation against us. That which maketh us have such low and undervaluing thoughts of precious Christ, is, because the most part of us are not acquainted with the deep and serious exercise of the Law; that is a mystery to the most part of a Christians practise. Ye know that there were four streams which went out from the Paradise of God, into which man was first placed; and so may we say, that there are four golden streams, by which lost and destroyed, man is brought back again to this *Eden* and Paradise of everlasting delights. First, there is the precious stream of Christ's righteousness, by which we must be justified. And secondly, there is that stream of his Sanctification, by which we must be purified. Thirdly, there is that stream of the wisdom of Christ, by which we must be conducted through this wilderness wherein we have lost our way. And fourthly, there is that stream of Christ's Redemption, by which we must be delivered from the power of our enemies; and must turn the battel in the gate, it is by the Redemption of Christ, that we shall once sing that triumphant song: *O Death! where is thy sting?* *O Grave! where is thy victory?* O, but all these streams will be sweet and refreshing to a soul

that is hotly pursued by the Law ; So long as we see not the ugliness of our leprosie in that glass his of the Law , we have our own *Abana* and *Par-accaber*, that we think may do our turn ; but when once our case is truly laid open to us , then will you we be content to wash our selves in Jordan se-ven times.

III. There is this advantage that waiteth on me the deep exercise of the Law , that it maketh a Christian live constantly under the impression of the sinfulness of sin. What is it that maketh the sin exceeding sinful to a Christian ? Is it not this, he hath been fourty dayes in Moses School ? And to we conceive that the ground why such fools as we make a mock of sin , is , because we know not what it is to be under the power of his wrath, and the apprehensions of the indignation of God.

But now to come to that which we intend to speak of , we told you at the first occasion that we spake upon these words, that there were many excellent things concerning the grace of Faith holden forth in them : The first thing which was holden forth concerning this radical grace of Faith , was the infinite advantage that redoundeth to a Christian through the exercise of Faith, and giving obedience to this command ; which we cleared , to be holden forth not only from the scope , but also from the nature of this command. And now to speak a little to the point , we shall propose these considerations that may abundantly show how advantagious a thing this excellent grace of Faith is.

1. The first consideration that speaketh it, is this, that Faith maketh Christ precious to a soul, according to that word, *1 Pet. 2. 7.* *To you that believe, Christ is precious.* And we would have you knowing this, that Faith maketh Christ more precious to a soul, then sense, or any other thing can make him. And first, Faith maketh Christ more precious then sense, because the estimation which the grace of Faith hath of Christ, it is builded upon the excellency of his Person; but the estimation of sense, it is builded upon the excellency of his actings; so that because he is such to them, therefore they love and esteem him: But that heroick grace of Faith, it taketh up the excellency of Christ's person, and that maketh him precious to them. Secondly, Faith makes Christ more precious then sense, because sense looketh to that love which Christ manifesteth in his face, and in his hands, and in his feet: But Faith looketh to that love which is in his heart. Sense will cry forth: *Who is like to thee, whose countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedar; whose hands are as gold rings set with beril, and whose legs are like pillars of marble, set in sockets of gold?* Sense will look to the smilings of Christ, and will wonder; it will look to his dispensations and actings, and will be constrained to cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* But the grace of Faith solaceth it self in the fountain from whence all these springs and sweet inundations of love do flow. Thirdly, Faith maketh Christ more precious then sense; because Faith looketh not only to

what Christ is presently , but unto what Christ is from eternity before time , and what Christ shall be unto eternity after time ; but sense only doth look to what Christ is presently. And ye must conceive that the sweet travelling of Faith betwixt infinite love from eternity before , and infinite love unto eternity after , must make Faith to fall in a sea of wondering , & raiseth the thoughts to the highest pitch of desire and estimation. Fourthly , we may likewise add , that the impression of the preciousness of Christ , which sense maketh upon the soul , is not so constant , nor so single , as that which Faith doth make. O , but the grace of Faith giveth the Christian a broad look of Christ , and letteth him see Christ cloathed with ornaments of glory and divine Majesty. Sense followeth Christ , rather that it may see his miracles and love , that it may be fed with loaves ; but Faith follows Christ , for himself , above all.

I I. The second consideration , to speak the advantage of it , is , that the grace of Faith , it hath , as it were , an arbitrary power with God ; so that whatsoever a Christian shall seek in Faith , he shall receive it. It was the noble gift that was once given to Faith , that it never should seek any thing and be denied , according to that word in Matt. 21.

22. *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing , ye shall receive it.* And that word in John 15. 7. *Abide in me , that is , believe ; and the promise , is annexed to this : Whosoever ye shall ask ye shall receive.* And it is clear likewise from the

prece-

preceding verse to our Text, that if we obey this command of Faith, *Whatisover we shal ask of God, we shal receive it.* And I would speak these two things to you from this. First, that oftentimes Christ putteth a blank in a Christians hand, who is much in the exercise of Faith, according to that in *Math 20. 32.* Is there not an ample blank put into that mans hand? *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* Christ desireth him to fill up the blank with what he would. And secondly, there is this, which is one of the greatest steps of Christ's matchless condescendency, that oftentimes when his own have sought in their presumption a blank to be put in their hand, Christ condescendeth to give it, according to that strange passage in *Mark 10. 35. 36.* the two Disciples who present this desire to Christ, *We desire, say they, that whatsoever we ask, thou shouldest give it unto us.* And presently that is answered: *What will ye that I shal do for you?* Christ hath an infinit good will to satisfie the desires of his own: and that which yet more speaketh out Christ's boundless good will to satisfie the desires of all that belong to him; it may be decared in that word, *John 16. 24.* where he chargeth his Disciples with this: *Hither to, saith he, have ye asked me nothing: ye must not suppose that Peter, James, and John, never sought a suite of Christ; but the meaning of that expression is this: Ye sought nothing in comparison of that which I was willing to give, and which your necessity did call for at my hands, which ye should have sought.*

III. There is this third consideration, to point out the advantage of Faith: it is that grace that keepeth all the graces of the Spirit in life, & exercise. Faith is that higher wheel, at the motion of which, all the lower wheels do move: if so we may speak, Faith is that *Primum mobile*, that first moves and turns about all these lower graces of the Spirit, according to that, 2 Pet. 1. 5. *Add to your faith, virtue, and to your virtue, patience, and to your patience, brotherly kindness.* First, then the grace of Faith keepeth in exercise the grace of love, as is clear, Eph. 3. 17. where these two graces are conjoined. As likewise from Rom. 5. 1. compared with verse 5. *Being justified by faith.* Then this effect followeth upon it, *the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.* And so it is certain, that Faith keepeth love in life. Faith being the spy of the soul, and that intelligencer and precious messenger: it goeth out and bringeth in objects unto love. Faith draweth aside the vail, and love setteth down and solaceth it self in the discoveries of Faith. Secondly, the grace of Faith likewise it keepeth the grace of mortification in exercise, as is clear, not only from Eph. 6. 9. but from 1 John 5. 4. *This is our victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith.* And it is certain that Faith keepeth mortification in exercise, and advanceth holiness, not only because of this, that Faith is that grace that presenteth to a Christian the absolute purity and spotless holiness of Jesus Christ; but also because it maketh them esteem their idols taste less as the white of an egg, and

and they become unto them as their sorrowful meat. The best principle of mortification is this, the discoveries of the invisible vertues of Jesus Christ : that mortification which ariseth from the lovely discoveries of the excellency of Jesus Christ, is most real and abiding; as those waters which rise from the highest springs, are not only constant, but likewise most deep and excellent.

Thirdly, Faith likewise hath influence upon mortification as it doth take hold of that infinite strength that is in Christ ; by which a Christian is enabled to mortifie his corruptions. Fourthly, Faith likewise maketh application of the blood of sprinkling, by which we are purified from dead works. Fifthly, likewise the grace of Faith keepeth in exercise the grace of Humility, as is clear, Rom. 3. 37. By what law, saith he, is boasting excluded? It is not by the law of works, but by the law of faith. Sixthly, Faith keepeth in exercise the grace of joy, as is clear, Rom. 15. 13. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. So that ye see the proper fruit of Faith, is joy in the holy Ghost. And certainly, did we believe more, we should rejoice more. Seventhly, and lastly, Faith keepeth in exercise the grace of Hope, for it is impossible for hope to be in lively exercises, except Faith once be exercised, which may be a shame unto you; for how can we hope to attain the thing that is promised, except our Faith first close with the promise? So there is this difference betwixt the grace of Faith, and the grace of Hope? the grace of Faith closeth with

the promises; but the grace of Hope, it closeth with the thing that is promised.

IV. There is this fourth consideration, that may speak out the excellency of the grace of Faith. It is that grace by which a Christian doth attain to most divine fellowship, and constant correspondence with heaven. Would you have that question resolved and determined? What is the best way not to stir up our Beloved, nor awake him until he please? It is this, be much in the grace of Faith; this is clear from Ephes. 3. 17. *That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith*. By the exercise of all other graces, Christ is but a sojourner, that turneth aside to tarry but for a night: but by the exercise of this grace, he cometh to take up house with us. I will tell you what Faith is, it is a ladder that reacheth betwixt heaven and earth, by the steps of which, a Christian doth dayly go up to heaven, and converse with the higher House. Faith is that grace, as the Apostle speaketh, by which we have access to the Throne of his grace. Faith ushers in the believer to the Throne; and without it, he can have no access there, nor joy when he is there.

V. Here is this advantage that attendeth the exercise of Faith, a believing Christian is a praying Christian according to that word in Mark 9. 24. where these two are conjoined together. *Lord, I believe; and then he falleth to his prayer presently, after that confession, Help thou our unbelief.* And it is clear from Psal. 63. 1. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul*

Se brifsteth for thce. And sometimes Faith is a most impatient grace ; but we may alwayes lay of it that it is a most diligent grace. Oh ! is not the neglect of this precious exercize of Faith, and of the duty of secret prayer, that makes our lean-
ness toifie to our face, and maketh our souls as a barren wilderness ? I am perswaded of this, that since Christ had any followers, and since ever this everlasting Gospel was preached in Paradise, the exercize of secret prayer was never so much neglected ; we have turned over all our prayers into complements with God. We know not what it is to rise at mid-night, and call upon God, and to enquire after our Maker under the silent watches of the night. O, but it is a sweet diversion from sleep, to retire our selves, in the silent seasons of the night, from all thoughts about worldly matters, and to converse with that invisible Majesty.

IV. There is this sixth consideration, to point out the advantage of Faith, that Faith is that grace that doth facilitate a Christians obedience, and maketh it most pleasant and easie : this is clear from Heb. 11.8. By faith Abraham when he was commanded to go to a strange land, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whether he went. The word may be rendered, he did chearfully obey. And vers. 17. By faith he offered up his only son. Would ye know the reason why his commands are your burden ? And why his precepts are your crosses ? It is because of this ye do not believe. And so it is most certain, that it is impossible for a Christian

to attain to a pleasant way of obedience without the exercise of faith. Faith holdeth up the crown to a Christian, and this crown maketh him to obey. Faith gathereth strength from Christ, and that strength maketh obedience very easy. Faith doth take up the excellency of Christ; and this maketh a Christian to look upon his duty, more as unto his dignity, than his duty. And we are persuaded of this, that our chariot-wheel should move more swiftly (like the chariots of Aminadab) if we were more in the exercise of the grace of Faith. Would ye know an answer to that question, what is first more requisite for a Christian while here below? Faith. And what secondly, is most requisite? Faith. And what thirdly, is most requisite for a Christian? Even Faith. Faith above all things, and above all things, Faith.

VII. There is another advantage of it, that by Faith our services and prayers are accepted of God. Would ye know what is the prayer of a Christian that is not in Faith? It is a smoak in his nostrils, and a fire that burneth all the day. The unbelievers sacrifice is an abomination to the Lord. This is clear from Heb. 11. 4. By faith Abel offered up unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. And we conceive, that there are many unanswered prayers which we do put up, because we want that noble exercise of Faith.

VIII. And lastly, we shal likewise add this, that faith is the grace by which a Christian hath that perfect and immediate sight, as is were, of great things that are promised to him. Faith

bringeth a Christian within sight of Heaven, and Faith bringeth a Christian within sight of God, according to that word, Heb. 11. 1. *Faith is the evidence of things not seen.* And that noble Paradox that is laid of Faith, Heb. 11. 27. *By faith Moses saw him that is invisible.* Is it not an impossible thing to see that which cannot be seen? But the meaning of it is this, that Faiths discoveries of God are as certain and sure as the discoveries of our bodily eyes are. Faith is an intelligent grace, yea, it is a most sure and infallible grace. What will Faith not do? And what can you do who want Faith?

Now to enforce the advantages and excellencies of Faith a little more, we shal propose to you the disadvantages of that woful sin of unbelief.

1. There is this disadvantage of the sin of unbelief, that all the actions that proceed from an unbeliever, they are impure and defiled, according to that in Tit. 1. 15. *But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure,* but even their mind and conscience is defiled, their prayer is unclean; yea, as Solomon speaketh, their plowing in sin; yea, their going about the most excellent duties (for matter) is an abomination to God, according to that word, Rom. 14. 23. *What ever is not of faith, is sin.* So the want of Faith is the great polluter of all our actions, and of all our performances.

2. There is this second disadvantage of disbelief, that it is impossible for one in the exercise of unbelief, to mortifie a lust or idol; and we may allud

allude unto those words in Matth. 17. 20. when his Disciples came to him, & asked him this question, *Why could not we cast out this devil?* That was given as an answer, *Because of your unbelief.* Unbelief is that which taketh up arms for our idols, and doth most strongly defend them; for there is nothing that will kill corruption so much as the exercise of Faith: and when that is laid aside, we have laid by our weapons, and have in a manner, concluded a treaty of peace with our idols that we shal not offend them, if they do not offend us.

3. There is this disadvantage that waiteth upon the sin of unbelief, that such an one cannot win to attain to the grace of establishment, but is always as the waves of the sea tossed to and fro, until once he win to the exercise of Faith, as is clear from Isai. 7. 9. *Except ye believe, ye shal not be established.*

4. There is this disadvantage that waiteth on it, is the mother of hardness and stupidity of heart, according to that word in Mark 16. 14. where he upbraideth them because of their unbelief; and then that danger followeth, to win hardness of heart, this is clear also from Acts 19. 9. where these two sister-devils are conjoined and locked together, *unbelief and hardness of heart;* because it is unbelief indeed that hindereth all the graces, by which the grace of Tenderness must be maintained.

5. There is this disadvantage in the sin of unbelief, that it is big with child of apostasie from God.

God, and of defection from him according to that word, *Heb. 3. 12.* Beware lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief (and there the fruit of it) to depart from the living God. And certainly it is no wonder that unbelief travels in birth, till that cursed child of apostasie be brought forth; not only because of this, that an unbeliever loseth the thought of the excellency of Christ, but also because he increaseth in his thoughts of love towards his Idols; for Christ doth decrease in those who misbelieve, and their Idols do increase in their love, and in their desires, and in their estimation.

6. There is this sixth disadvantage in the sin of unbelief, it hindereth the communication of many single workings and tokens of the love and favor of the most High, according to that sad word that is in *Mark. 13. 58.* at the close, *He could not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.* Unbelief, as it were, laid a restraint on Christ, that he could not effectuate those things which he was willing to perform. And to shut up our discourse at this time, I would only add these two aggravations which may somewhat enforce what we have spoken. I say, there are these two aggravations in the sin of unbelief, even in his own who have a right (& also his call) to believe.

1. That after that Christ hath given most sensible discoveries of himself (*Wherein we have seen him, as it were, face to face*) yet ye will not believe. This is clear from *John 6. 36.* Though ye have seen me, saith Christ, yet ye do not believe in me. There

is not a manifestation of Christ's presence, but it is a witness against you of your unbelief: Will you hear the voice of sense that is rectified? If you see this, believe on the Son of God. 2. That notwithstanding of the signal demonstrations of the power of Christ, yet though it were the mortifying of some lust and Idol within them, yet they will not believe, but upon new temptations will doubt of his love to them. Christ preacheth Faith by his Word; he preacheth Faith by his sufferings; he preacheth Faith by his dispensations; he preacheth Faith by his promises; he preacheth Faith by his rods: and if these five instruments will not ingage your hearts to believe, who can move them? Doth not his two wounds in his precious hands, preach out this point of Faith, Believe him? Doth not that hole opened in his side, preach this doctrine, That we should believe in him? And these two wounds that he received in his precious feet, do they not preach this, That we should believe on a crucified Saviour? And we would only say this, that sometimes it is the case of his own, that after the convictions of this, that it is their duty to believe, and also after some desires to close with Christ, yet they find inability to close with him. Is it not certain, that to will (to believe) is sometime present with you; but how to perform, you know not? And I would have a Christian making this four-fold use of such a dispensation as that (which is most ordinarily) when convictions of our duty to believe, and some desires to close with Christ, is

not followed with actual performances.

1. To study to have your convictions more deeply rooted within you, for it doth sometimes follow, that resolutions and mints to believe, are hot blist with actual believing, because the conviction of our duty to believe, is not deeply imprinted upon our conscience.

2. Be convinced of that desperate enmity (and that mystery of iniquity) that is within you, that ye can have some will to do, without ability to perform. We confess, it is not an ordinary disease in these dayes, to have such a contrariety betwixt a Christians will and his practice, our will for the most part being no better than our practice, but sometimes it is, which may make you cry forth, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?*

3. That ye would be much in the employing of Christ, that as he hath given you to will, so also he might make you to do. Christ is about to convince his own in such a dispensation as this, *That Faith is the gift of God;* Faith is so noble a grace that it cannot be spinned out from our resolutions, nor from our endeavors, Faith is such a divine plant, *as the Fathers right hand must plant in our souls.*

4. Let it convince you of the excellency of the grace of Faith (for the difficulty of the attaining to any thing may speak out the excellency of that thing) there is no sin but it may be easily win at, there is an easiness and facility to overtake the paths of our Idols, but the graces of the Spirit

Spirit are so excellent things, that we must fight before we attain them. And you who are strangers to Christ Jesus (and have never known what it is to close with him) we would request you in Christ's name to be reconciled to him. What know ye, O men (or rather Atheists) before this shall be the last summons that ye shall get to believe? And that because ye disobey this precious summons, there shall be one presented to you, that ye cannot sit. I remember of one man who looking upon many thousands that were under his command, weeped over them when he considered, how that within a few years these should be laid in their graves, and should be in eternity. O but it were much of our concernment to be trying our selves how it is with us; we are not afraid that it is a breach of charity, to wish, that but one of each ten that are within these doors, were heirs of the grace of life, and had the solide and spiritual expectation of heaven. I think, if Christ were to come presently to speak to us, He might not only say to each twelve that are here, *One of you shall betray me*, but we are afraid that he should say to each twelve that are here *Eleven of you shall betray me*, and but one only shall passe free. O doth it not concern you to enquire where you shall rest at night; when the long shadows of everlasting evening shall be stretched out upon you? I think there are some that are so settled upon their leases, that if they were one day in hell, and saw

all the torments that are there, and were brought from it the next day to live on earth, they would not repent: And more, there are some that take them up on day to see the joyes of Heaven, and bring them back again, they would not pursue after these blessed and everlasting enjoyments.

O is not Christ much undervalued by us? But I must tell you this, *One wo is past, but behold another wo is coming.* O the searchings of those spirits who are entered into their everlasting prison house, out of which their is no redemption. What shal be your choise, when Christ shall come in the clouds? I am perswaded there are many, to whom at that day, this Doctrine would be ravishing, viz. That there were not a death, that there were not a God, and that there were not an eternity. O! will you believe, That the sword of the justice of God is bathed in heaven, and shall come down to make a sacrifice, not in the land of Idumea nor in the land of Bezra; but he is to make a sacrifice amongst his people, who seemed to make a Covenant with him by sacrifice. Ah, ah, shall we say that if that argument were used to many; that within fourty dayes they should be at their long and everlasting home, they would yet spend thirty nine of those dayes in taking pleasure upon their lusts. I am perswaded of this; that there are many who think that the way betwixt heaven and earth, is but one dayes journey; they think they can believe in one day, and triumphant night. But, O it shal be short triumphing that such Believers as those shall have. Therefore, O

dy to close with a crucified Saviour ; rest on his gift of
by Faith, delight your selves in him with his grace
and let your souls be longing for the day when much
that voyce shall be heard in Heaven , O how could
sweetly will it be sung ! Arise, arise, arise, my love
my dove, my fair one and come away ; for behold was
your Winter is past your everlasting Summer is come
and the time of the singing of the birds is now
When Christ shall come over thele Mountains study
Bethel, he shall cry, Behold, I come, and the soul shall
shall sweetly answer, Come blessed Lord Jesus Christ
come. O what a life shall it be , that with those
two arms you should eternally incircle Christ , and
hold him in your arms , or rather be incircled by
him ? Wait for him for he shall come, and his reward
is with him , and he shal once take home the we
ried travellers of hope.

SERMON IV.

JOHN 3. 23. This is his Commandment , that we
should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ , &c.

THESE are two great and excellent gifts which God in the depth of his boundless love hath bestowed on his own. First , there is that infinite gift , and royal donation , his own beloved Son Jesus Christ , which is called , The gift of God , John 4. 10. And secondly , there is that excellent gift of the grace of Faith , which God hath bestowed upon his own , which is also called , The gift of God , Ephes. 2. 8. Faith is

of God. And is it not certain, that these two precious gifts ought to engage our souls and hearts much unto him? Infinite Majesty could give no greater then his Son, and infinite poverty could receive no other gift so suitable as Christ: It is the most noble gift that Heaven could give, and it is the greatest advantage for earth to receive

And we could wish that the most part of the study and practise of men (that is spent in pursuit after these low and transient vanities) might be once taken up in that precious pursuit after Christ. We could wish that all the questions and debates of the time, were turned over into a soul-concerning question, *What shall we do to be saved?* And that all the questions, controversies, and contentions of the times, were turned over into that divine contention, and heavenly debate, *Who should be most for Christ, who should be most for the exalting of the noble and excellent plant of renown?* And that all our judgings and searchings of other mens practises and estates, might be turned over into the useful search, to prove and examine ourselves; whether we be in the faith or not? And I would ask you this question, What are your thoughts concerning precious Christ, seeing he is that noble object of Faith? We would only have you take along these things, by which Christ may be much commended to your hearts. First, there was never any that with the eyes of Faith did behold the matchless beauty and transcendent worth of that crucified Saviour, that returned his enemy. There is soul-conquering virtue

virtue in the face of Christ: and there is here a
captivating, and overcoming power in the beauty of
Jesus Christ. This first sight that ever persecuted our
Saul got of Christ, it brought him unto an endless ob-
captivity of love. Secondly, there is this that we
would say of precious Christ, which may engage us
our souls unto him, that for all the wrongs be-
vers do to Christ, yet hath he never an ill word to
them to his Father, but commends them; which
is clear from that of John 17. 6. where Christ doth
commend the Disciples to the Father, for the grace
of obedience: *They have kept thy word.* And for the
grace of Faith, vers. 8. *They have believed that thou*
didst send me. And yet were not the Disciples
most defective in obedience both in this, *Then*
they did not take up their cross, and follow Christ, and
and also that they did not adhere to him in the day
that he was brought to Caiaphas Hall? And were
they not most defective in the grace of Faith, as is
clear from Matth. 17 17. and likewise from
John 14. 1. he is pressing them to believe in
him, and yet he doth commend them to the Fa-
ther, as most perfect in those things? Thirdly
there is this that we wou'd lastly say of him who is
the noble object of Faith; look to the eminent
depths of Christ's condescendency, and then you
will be provoked to love him. Was it not in-
finite love that made Christ to lie three days
in the Grave, that we might be through all
the ages of eternity with him? Was it not in-
finite condescendency that made his precious
head wear a crown of Thorns, that we might
eternal

ternally wear a crown of glory? Was it not infinite condescendency that made Christ wear a purple robe, that so we might wear that precious robe of the righteousness of the Saints? And was it not matchless condescendency, that Christ who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that so we might become like unto him, and be made the righteousness of God in him?

But to come to that which we intend mainly to speak upon at this time, which is that second thing that we proposed to speak of from these words, and that is concerning the excellency of this grace of Faith, which we cleared, was holden out in that, that Faith was called his commandment, which is called by way of eminency and excellency. There are many things in Scripture, which may sweetly point out the precious excellency of this grace of Faith, and we shall only speak to these things?

I. The first thing that speaketh out the excellency of Faith, is this, it exerciseth it self upon a most noble object, to wit, Jesus Christ; Faith and Love being the two arms of the immortal soul, by which we do imbrace a crucified Savior, which is often pointed at in Scripture, and we shall point at these three principal acts of Faith, which it exerciseth on Jesus Christ, as the object of it.

I. The first is, to make up an union betwixt Christ and the believer (Faith being indeed an uniting grace, and that which knitteth the members to the head) and to make this more fully appear, we would point out a little what a sweet

harmony and correspondency there is betwixt these two sister-graces, to wit, Faith and Love. Faith is that nail which fasteneth the soul to Christ, and Love is that grace which driveth that nail to the head: Faith at first taketh but a tender grip of Christ, and then love cometh in, and maketh the soul take a more sure grip of him. Secondly, ye may see their harmony in this, Faith is that grace which taketh hold (as it were) of the garment of Christ, and of his words; but Love (that ambitious grace) it taketh hold of the heart of Christ, and (as it were) his heart doth melt in the hand of Love. Thirdly, it may be seen in this, Faith is that grace which draweth the first draught of the likeness and Image of Christ upon a soul: but that accomplishing grace of Love, it doth compleat these first draughts, and these imperfect lineaments of Christ's Image, which were first drawn on the soul. Fourthly, by Faith and love, the heart of Christ and of the believer are so united, that they are no more two, but one Spirit.

2. There is this second act that Faith exerciseth on Christ, and it is in discovering the matchless excellencies, and the transcendent properties of Jesus Christ. O what large and precious commentaries doth Faith make upon Christ! it is indeed that faithful spy, which doth always bring up a good report of him: Hence it is, that Faith is called understanding, Coloss. 2. 2. because it is that grace which revealeth much of the precious truth of that noble object.

3. And there is this third noble act of Faith exerci-

exercising it self upon Christ, viz. It maketh Christ precious to the soul, according to that word 1. Pet. 2.7. *unto you which believe, he is precious.* And if there were no other thing to speak worth its worth but that, it is more then sufficient; or no doubt this is the exercise of the higher House to be dwelling on the contemplation of Christ's beauty, and to have their souls transported with love towards him, and with joy in him. Reason and amazement are seldom companions, but here they do sweetly join together, First, a Christian loveth Christ, because of Christ's actings; and then he loveth all these actings, because they come from Christ.

2. Now secondly, this pointeth out the precious excellency of the grace of Faith; it is that grace which is most mysterious and sublime in its actings; it hath a more divine and sublime way of acting then any other grace; hence it is called *The Mystery of Faith*, which speaketh this, that the actings of Faith, are mysteries to the most part of the world: and I shall only point at these things, which may speak out the mysterious actings of the grace of Faith.

1. Faith can believe, and fix it self on a word of promise, although sense, reason, and probability, seem to contradict the accomplishment of that promise. Faith it walketh not by the low dictates of sense and reason, but by a higher rule, to wit, *The sure word of prophecy*, which is clear from Rom. 4.19. where *Abraham believed the promise*, notwithstanding that sense and reason seemed to contradict

ic; He considered not the deadness of his own body, neither the barrenness of Sarahs womb, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And it is clear from Heb. 11. 29. 30. where Faith believed the passing through the Red sea upon dry ground, which was most contrary to sense and reason. Faith believed the falling down of the walls of Jericho, the blowing of rams horns: which things are most impossible to sense and reason; for sense will sometimes cry out, All men are liars; and reason will say, How can such a thing be? and yet that hearty roick grace of Faith, cryeth out, Hath he spoken it? He will also do it. Hath he said it? Then it shall come to pass.

2. Faith can believe a word of promise, notwithstanding that the dispensations of God seem to contradict it; as was clear in Job, who professed he would trust in God though he should kill him. And no doubt but this was the practice of believing Jacob, he trusted that that promise should be accomplished, that the elder should serve the younger: though all the dispensations of God which he did meet with, seemed to say that promise should not be accomplished.

3. Faith can believe a word of promise, even when the commands of God seem to contradict the accomplishment of that promise; this is clear in that singular instance of Abrahams Faith, that notwithstanding he was commanded to kill his promised seed (upon whom did depend the accomplishment of the promises;) yet he believed that the promises should be performed. And though

here were indeed extraordinary and strange try-
als of his Faith, as he had natural afflictions to
wrestle with, yet over the belly of all these, be-
lieving Abraham he giveth Faith to the promise,
and bringeth his son Isaac to the Altar (though
he did receive him back again) this is clear from
Heb. 11. 17. 18. 19.

4. Faith can exercise it self upon the promise,
notwithstanding that challenges and convictions
of unworthiness and guilt do wait on the Christi-
an; this is clear, 2 Sam. 23. 5. that although his
house was not so with God as did become, yet he
believed the promise; as likewise it is clear from
Psal. 65. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me*, and
yet that doth not interrupt his faith; but he saith,
As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them a-
way. And certainly it were a noble and precious
act of Faith to believe, notwithstanding of unan-
swerable challenges of guilt; the best way, both
to crucifie our Idols, and to answer those chal-
lenges, is believing, and hoping against hope, and
closing with Christ, this is clear from Isa. 64. 6.
7. compared with ver. 8. where after strange chal-
lenges, the Prophet hath a strange word, *but now,*
O Lord, thou art our Father. There is an Empha-
sis in the word (*now*) for all this, *yet thou art*
(*now*) *our Father.*

5. And lastly, this pointeth out the mysteri-
ous acting of the grace of Faith, that it exer-
ciseth it self upon an invisible object, even upon
Christ not yet seen, according to that word,
1 Pet. 5. 8. *Whom having not seen, yet ye love, in*

whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, I pose the greater part of you who are here, whether or not these be two of the greatest paradoxes and mysteries unto you? For is not this a mystery to love him whom we never saw? *Whom believing not seen, yet ye love.* To love an absent and unseen Christ, is a mystery to the most part of the world; and is not this a mystery to believe on him whom we never saw? *In whom, though ye see him not, yet believing.* And I shall add this, that Faith can hold fast its interest with God, notwithstanding the most precious Christians should call us hypocrites, and not acknowledge us: this is clear from the practice of Job, and most clear from the word, *Isai. 63. 16. Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.*

III. Thirdly, this pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith, that Faith (when it is in exercise) is that grace by which a Christian doth attain unto most sensible enjoyments. There is a great question that is much debated among Christians, what is the way to win to this happiness, to be always under the sweet and refreshing influence of heaven, and to have his dew always coming down upon our branches? I can give but this, Be much in the exercise of Faith; this is clear from that notion and name put upon Faith, *Isai. 45. 22. it is called, a looking to Christ*, which is a most sensible act. If ye would know a description of Faith, it is this, *The divine contemplation of the immortal soul, upon that divine excellency*.

excellent and precious object Jesus Christ: for God never made Faith a liar, and therefore its eye is never off him that is the noble object of Faith, Jesus Christ manifested in the Gospel: and it is clear, Eph. 1.13. *After ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, which preacheth out the excellent enjoyments these had after their closing with Christ who is invisible.* Our Faith is called a seeing, which speaketh out this, that Faiths sight of God is as certain as if it did behold him with our eyes; as is clear, Heb. 11. 27. *Moses saw him by faith who is invisible.* And we conceive that the ground which maketh the most part of us have such complaints, *How long wilt thou forget us for ever?* It is this, the want of the spiritual exercise of Faith; and are there not some here who may cry out, *It is more then thirty days since I did behold the King:* Yea, there are some who go a greater length, and cry out, *I have lived these two years at Jerusalem, and yet I have not seen the Kings face:* Yea, there are some here whose complaint may go a little higher, and cry forth, *These three years and six moneths it hath not rained on me:* but the clouds have been restrained, and bound up, and the heavens have become brass. And would ye know the rise of these complaints? It is this, ye are not much in the spiritual exercise of faith. And to you, I would only say these two words. First, it is easier to perswade a reprobate that he is defective in the fear of God, and in his love to God, then to perswade some such, that they are wanting to God in their faith; for they

hold fast that piece of desperate iniquity till the V
die. Secondly, we would say to those of you who
have the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and who
have tasted of the sweetness of Christ, some day
you will be less convinced for the neglect of the
duty of faith, than for the neglect of the duty of the
prayer, or of the duty of keeping the Sabbath day. But I am perswaded of this, that if the no
ble worth of that transcendent object were
known, we would have a holy impatience until
once we did believe.

IV. Fourthly, this also pointeth out the excellency of the grace of faith; it is that grace by
which a Christian is advanced to the highest and
most inconceivable pitch of dignity, and that is to
be the child of the living God; as is clear, John i. 12. *To as many as received him believed in him, he*
gave power or prerogative to become the sons of God. And
certainly that noble prerogative of adoption
is much undervalued by many: And I will tell
you two grounds whereon the most part of men
undervalue that excellent gift of adoption. First,
they do not take up the infinite highness of God,
and what a one he is, otherwise they would cry
out with David; *Seemeth it a smal thing in your*
eyes, to be a son to the King of Kings? Secondly,
we do not take up, nor understand those match-
less privileges which are given to them who are
once in this estate. I am perswaded, if this were
believed, that he who is a servant doth not abide in
the house for ever, though he that is a son doth; it
would stir us up to more divine zeal in our pursuit
after Christ.

V. Fifthly, this likewise pointeth out the excellency of the grace of faith; it is that grace by which all other actions are pleasant to God, & are taken off our hand; as is clear, *Heb. 11. 4.* By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain: which must be understood even to all other duties. And that word, ver. 6. *Without faith it is impossible to please God,* speaketh this also, that by faith we do exceedingly please him. And this is a most sad and lamentable reproof unto many who are here, that their actions do not please God, because they are not in faith. Would you know a description of your prayers? (ye who are hypocrites, and destitute of the knowledge of God) It is this your prayers are the bresch of the third command, *in taking the Name of the Lord in vain,* for which he will not hold you guiltless. And would you know what is your hearing of Sermons? *It is an abomination to the Lord;* according to that word in *Tit. 1. 15.* *To the unbelieving and impure, is nothing clean.* And as Solomon doth speak, *The plowing of the wicked is sin;* so that all your actions that ye go about, are but an offence to the Majesty of the Lord.

Now we would speak to these two things, before we proceed to the evidence of faith, to wit: First, that there is a difference betwixt the direct act of faith, and the reflecting act of faith: for there may be a direct act of faith in a Christian, when he is not persuaded that he doth believe; but the reflecting acts of faith, are these which a Christian hath when he is persuaded in his con-

science that he doth believe. And we would fain condly say, that there are many that do go down to their grave under that soul-destroying delusion, that they are in the Faith, and yet never did know what Faith is. I am perswaded there are many whom all the preachings in the world will never perswade that they did never believe: their Faith being born with them, and it will die with them without any fruit; but faith being such an excellent grace, and so advantagious, whereof we have spoken a few things, we shal speak a little further of it: First, in pointing out some evidences by which a Christian may know whether or not he be in the Faith. Secondly, I shal give you some helps whereby Faith may be keepeid in exercise.

103

I. Now there is this first evidence of Faith, that a Christian who doth believe, he accounteth absence and want of fellowship with Christ, and communion with him, one of the greatest and most lamentable crosses that ever he had; as is clear, *Psal. 13. 3.* *Lighten mine eyes,* said *David,* that is, *let me behold, and be satisfied with thy face,* and the motive that he backeth it with, is this, *Lest I sleep the sleep of death.* *David* thought himself a dead man if Christ did withdraw his presence from him, also it is clear, *Cant. 3. 1.* compared with the following verses, where absence from Christ, and want of communion with him, was the greatest cross the Spouse had; and it is clear from *John 20. 11. 12. 13.* where *Mary* had a holy disdain of all things in respect and com-

comparison of Christ. But I will tell you what an hypocrite doth most lament, and that is the want of reputation amongst the Saints; that is the great god and Idol amongst hypocrites, and that which (when not enjoyed) hypocrites, and Atheists lament most; the world, and the lusts of their eyes, when they want these then they cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* They think heaven can never make up the losse of earth. And certainly if many of us would examine our selves by this, we should find our selves most defective: I would pose all you who are here, who have taken on a name to be followers of Christ, whether or not ye have been content to walk thirty days in absence from Christ, and yet never to lament it: Hath not Christ been thirty dayes and more in heaven without a visite from you? And yet for all this, you have not clothed your selves with sackcloath: I will not say that this is an undeniable evidence of the tall want of the grace of faith; but it doth eminently prove this, that the person who hath come this length, hath lost much of his primitive love, and much of that high esteem, which he ought to have of matchless Christ: what can you find in this world, that maketh you converse so little with heaven? I think that it is the noble encouragement of a Christian, when he is going down to his grave, that he hath this where with to comfort himself, *I am to change my place, but not my company.* Death to the believing Christian being a blessed transition and transportation to

a more immediat, constant, and uninterrupted enjoyment of God: But I believe, that if all who have the name of Believers in this generation should go to heaven, they might have, this to say, I am now not only to change my place but also my company: For these seventy years I have been conversant with my Idols, but now I am to converse with more blessed, divine and excellent company. O that ye might be persuaded to pursue much after an absent Christ! Were it not a sweet period of our life, to breath out our last breath in his arms, and to be living in the faith of being eternally with him, which might be founded upon his Word.

II. There is this second evidence of one that is in the Faith: They do endeavor to advance that necessary work of the mortification of their Idols, according to that word 1 John 3. 3. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Acts 15. 9. Faith it purifieth the heart. And concerning this evidence (least any should mistake it) I would say these things to you. First the mortification of a Christian, as long as he is here below, it doth more consist in resolutions than in attainments, it is certain, that there are high attainments of a Christian, in the mortification of his Idols; but his resolutions go far above his performances. Secondly, we would say this. That those Christians who never came this length in Christianity, to make that an universal conclusion, and full resolution, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* They

may suspect themselves, that they are not in the Faith: For a Christian that is in Christ, he is universal in resolutions, though he be not so in practice, but defective in performances. A Christian may have big resolutions with weak performances; for resolutions will be at the gate of heaven, before practice come from the border of hell; there being a long distance betwixt resolution and practice, and the one much swifter than the other. And thirdly, We would likewise, say that ye who never did know what it was to endeavour (by prayer and the exercises of other duties) the mortification of your lusts and Idols, ye may be afraid, that ye have not yet the hope of seeing him as he is. And I would say this to many who are settled upon their lees, and who never did know what it was to spend one hour in secret prayer for mortifying an Idol, that they would beware, lest that curse be past in heaven against them. I would have purged you; and ye would not be purged, therefore ye shall not be purged any more till ye die. That iniquity of refusing to commune with Christ in the work of secret mortification, I say; that iniquity shall not be purged away. And we would once seriously desire you by that dreadfull sentence that Christ shall passe against you, and by the love you have to your immortal souls, and by the pains of those everlasting torments in hell, that ye would seriously set about the work of spiritual mortification, that so ye may evidence that ye have believed, and that ye have the soul-comforting hope of eternal life.

life. I would only speake this one word to you para-
and desire you seriously to ponder it: What if, P-
within twelve hours hereafter a summons were And
given to you, without continuation of dayes, to the
compear before the solemn and dreadful Tribu- lou
nal of that impartial Judge, Jesus Christ? what ad
suppose ye, would be your thoughts? Will you take
examine your own conscience, what you think lie
would be your thoughts, if such summons were th
given unto you: I am perswaded of this, That
your knees would smite one against another, and
your faces would gather paleness, seeing your con- ne
science would condemn you, That you had been
weighed in the ballance and found light: O think
ye that ye can both fight and triumph in one day? I
Think ye that ye can fight and overcome in one
day? Think ye your lusts and unmortified cor- a
ruptions so weak, and faint-hearted an enemy,
that upon the first appearance of such imaginary
champions (as most part of us are in our own
eyes) that your idols would lay down arms, and
let you trample on them? Believe me, mortifica- i
tion is not a work of one day, or one year, but it is
a work will serve you all your time, begin as soon
as you will; and therefore seeing you have spent
your dayes in the works of the flesh, it is time
that now you would begin and pursue after him,
whose work is with him, and whose reward shall
come before him.

III. Now there is this third evidence, by which
a Christian may know whether he be in the faith
or not; & it is, that Christ is matchless and incom-
parable

parable unto such an one, according to that word, Pet. 3. 7. *To you that believe, Christ is precious.* And that word that Luke hath in his 7. chap. at the close: *That she to whom much was forgiven, loved much.* Now lest this likewise should prove a discouragement to any, I would only have you take notice of this, that a Christian may be a believer, and yet want the sensible discoveries of this, that Christ is matchless precious to him: but this is certain, that when they are in the lively exercise of Faith, it is impossible then for them not to esteem Christ matchless: and I would speak this likewise to many who are here; Have you not been living these ten years in Faith? And I would pose you with this: Esteem you not your Idols more matchless then Christ and more of worth then he? It is impossible that there can be any lively exercise of faith, and not esteem Christ matchless. It is not to say it with your mouth and contradict it with your heart, will do the busines: for if your heart could speak, it would say, I would sell Christ for thirty pieces of silver; but mine idols would I sell at no rate. Are there not many of you who love the world and its pleasures, better then eternity of joy? O! know you not that word, O ye desperately ignorant of the truths of God! *That he who loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him?* And yet notwithstanding of the light of the Word, yet you would sell your immortal souls, with Esau for a mess of pottage. O! but it is a poor bargain, when you have sold the eternity of joy, for a passing world, and for its transi-

transitory delights ! I would earnestly know what shall be your thoughts in that day, when you shall be standing upon the utmost line betwixt time and eternity ? O ! what will be your thoughts at that day ? But you are to follow on to endless pain, both appearance, and then you are to leave your idols, & I shall only desire that you may read the words *Isai. 10. 3.* *What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far ? To whom will ye flee for help ? And where will ye leave your glory ? You shall then preach mortification to the life, though all the time of mortification shall be then cut off.* O but to hear a worldly minded man, when eternity of pain is looking him in the face, preach out concerning the vanity of this world, might it not preswade you, that the world is a fancy and a dream that shall flee away, and shall leave you in the day of your greatest strait ?

IV. And there is this fourth evidence of faith, that a Christian who doth truly believe, he is that Christian who entertaineth a divine jealousy, and a holy suspition of himself, whether or not he doth believe. I love not that faith which is void of fear : this was clear in the practice of believing Noah, that though by faith he built the Ark yet he had fear mixed with his faith. I know that there are some who are ignorant concerning this, what it is to doubt concerning eternal peace ? and more, it is not every one that doubteth, that certainly shall get heaven, fore I think an hypocrite may doubt concerning his eternal salvation ; however, I think the exercise of an hypocrite under his

his doubtings, it is more the exercise of his judgement then the exercise of his conscience. And I may say, that if all the exercise of the Law, which is preached in these dayes, were narrowly searched, it would be more the exercise of light, then the exercise of conscience. We speak these things as our doubt, which was never our exercise, and we make these things our publick exercise, which was never our private and chamber-exercise. And I think that if all that a Christian did speak to God in prayer, were his exercise, he would speak less, and wonder more. We would be speechless when we go to God; for often if we did speak nothing but our exercise, we would have nothing to say. And certainly it is true, that often we fall into that woful sin of *desperate lying against the holy Ghost*, by flattering God with our mouth, and lying unto him with our tongue. And I shall only say these two words, there are some who have this for their great design, viz. they would be at peace with their conscience, and also they would beat peace with their idols: they would gladly reconcile conscience and their idols together. That is their great design. And there are some whose design is a little more refined; they study rather to be reconciled with their conscience, then to be reconciled with God: Their great aim they shoot at, is this, to get their conscience quieted, though they know not what it is to have the soul-comforting peace of God to quiet them.

V. Now there is this last evidence of Faith, that justifying faith is a faith which putteth the

Chri-

Christian to be much in the exercise of those ~~de~~ by ~~G~~
ties by which it may be maintained: for ~~throu~~
must keep faith as the *apple of our eye*: and ~~so~~ly,
that end, I would only give you these ~~thre~~ peri
things, by which faith must be kept in exercise whi
and a real Christian will be endeavoring, ~~in hav~~
some measure, to attain unto these.

I. It keepeth faith much in exercise, to be much in marking and taking notice of the divine exercise, and proofs of the love of God, wherewithal a Christian doth meet, as is clear from that word in Rom. 5. 4. *Experience worketh hope.* I durst be bold to charge the most part that are indeed in Christ with this, that they are too little in remarking, and taking notice of the experiences of his love. You should mark the place of your experience, and much more you should mark the experience it self, as is clear from Scripture, that the very place where Christians did meet with experience in such an enjoyment of God, they marked it; Ezech. 1. 1. *By the rivers of Chebar the heavens were opened, and I saw the visions of God.* And Gen. 32. 30. Jacob called the place Peniel. The place of being, after seeing of the face of God, it was so remarkable unto him. And we conceive that you would mark these two things mainly in your practice. First, you would mark if you can possibly, the first day of your closing with Christ, and your coming out of Egypt: and we may allude unto that command (if not more then allude to it.) in Deut. 16. 1. *Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Pasceover unto the Lord.*

by God; for in the moneth of *Abib*, the Lord thy God brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And secondly, we would have you much in marking these experiences which have encreased your faith, and which have strengthened your love, and which have made you mortifie your idols. These are experiences especially to be marked.

2. Faith is kept in exercise, and we win to the lively assurance of our interest in God, which we would press upon you, by being much in the exercise of secret prayer. O! but many love much to pray when abroad, who never loved to pray when alone; and that is a desperate sign of hypocrisy, according to that *Matth. 6. 5.* it is said of hypocrites; *They love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the street, that they might be seen of men.* But it is never said of these persons, that they love to pray alone, only they loved to pray in Synagogues; but is is secret and retired prayers by which faith must be kept in exercise.

3. And there is this likewise that we would press upon you, that you would be much in studying communion and fellowship with God, that so your faith may be kept in life. And, O what a blessed life were it, each day to be taken up to the top of the Mount *Pisgæ*, and there to behold that promised land, to get a refreshing sight of the crown every morning, which might make us walk with joy all along the day! The heart of a Christian ought to be in heaven, his conversation ought to be there, his eyes ought to be there; and I know not what of a Christian ought to be out

out of heaven (even before his going there) saw his lumpish tabernacle of clay, which cannot inherit incorruption till he be made incorruptible. And I shal say no more but this, many of us are readier to betray him with a kils, and crucifie him afresh, then to keep communion with him: we wo eternally be to him by whom the son of man is betrayed, and that doth crucifie Christ afresh: it were better that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depth of the sea. remember an expression of a man, not two dayes ago, who upon his death-bed, being asked by one, what he was doing? did most stupidly, though most truly, reply, That he was fighting with Christ. And I think, that the most part of us (if he prevent us not) shal die fighting with Christ. But know and be perswaded, that he is too sore a party for us to fight with: He will once tread you in the wine-press of his fury, and he shall return with dyed garments from treading such of you as would not imbrace him: He shal destroy you with all his heart. Therefore be instructed (least his soul be disjointed from you) as that word in Jer. 6. 8. And least your soul eternally be separated from him. Be instructed, I say, to close with him by faith. Now to him who can make you to do so, we desire to give praise.

In the two sermons next following, you have the rest of these sweet purposes which the worthy Author preached upon the same Text.

SERMON V.

JOHN 3. 23. This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.

There are two great rocks upon which a Christian doth ordinarily dash in his way and motion toward his rest. 1. The rock of presumption and carnal confidence, so that when Christ dangleth them upon his knees, and satisfieth them with the breasts of his consolations, and maketh their cup to over-flow, then they cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved.* And 2. the rock of misbelief and discouragement, so that when he hideth his face, and turneth back the face of his Throne, then they cry out; *Our hope and strength is perished from the Lord.* We know not what it is to bear our enjoyments by humility, nor our crosses by patience and submission. O! but misbelief and jealousy are bad interpreters of dark dispensations: they know not what it is to read these mysterious characters of divine providence, except they be written in the legible characters of sense: misbelief is big with child of twins, and is travelling till it bring forth apostasy and security: and no doubt, he is a blessed Christian that hath overcome that woful idol of misbelief, and doth walk by that Royal law of the Word, and not by that changeable rule of dispensations. We conceive that there are three great Idols and Dagons of a Christian

stian, that hindereth him from putting a blamal in Christ's hand, concerning his guiding to Heaven; there is pride, self-indulgence, and security. Do we not covet to be more excellent then our neighbors? Do we not love to travel to heaven through a valley of roses? And do we not But ambitiously desire to walk toward Sion sleeping, rather then weeping, as we go? Are there not in some words that we would have taken out of the publick Bible? That is sad Divinity to flesh and blood: omnes Through many tribulations we must enter into the living Kingdom of Heaven, we love not to be changed into a new vessel, to vessel, that so our scent may be taken from us.

There are three great enemies of Christ, misbelief, hypocrisy, and profanity. Misbelief is a bloody sin, hypocrisy is a silent sin, profanity is a crying sin, those are mother evils. And I shall give you these differences betwixt them: Misbelief crucifieth Christ under the vail of humility, hypocrisy crucifieth Christ under the vail of love, and profanity putteth him to open shame. Misbelief denieth the love and power of God, hypocrisy denieth the omniscience of God, and profanity denieth the justice of God: misbelief is a sin that looketh after inherent righteousness, hypocrisy is a sin that looketh after external holiness only, and profanity is a sin that looketh after heaven without holiness, making a connexion between those things that God hath alwayes separat, and separating those things which he hath alwayes put together, so that their sa-

al once prove a delusion, and flee away as a dream in the night: but let us study this excellent grace of true and saving faith, which shall be precious remedy against all those Christ-destroying and soul-destroying evils.

But now to come to that which we did propose thirdly, to be spoken of from the words, which was the sweetnes of this grace of faith; no doubt it is a pleasant command, and it maketh all commands pleasant: it is that which casteth a divine lustre upon the most hard sayings of Christ, and maketh the Christian to cry forth, *God hath spoken in his Holinesse, I will rejoice.* We need not stand long to clear that faith is a sweet, and refreshing command; for it is oftentimes recorded in Scripture to the advantage of this grace, that unspeakable joy and heavenly delight, are the hand-maids that wait upon it. But more particularly to make it out, we shall speak to these things. The first is, that this grace giveth a Christian a broad and comprehensive sight of Christ, and maketh to behold not only the beauty of his actings, but the beauty of his person: and there are these three precious sights that faith giveth to a Christian of Christ. First, letteth the christian see Christ in his absolute and personal excellency, taking him up as the eternall Son of God, as the Ancient of dayes, as the Father of Eternity, as the expresse Image of his Father's person, and the brightness of his glory, and his filleth the soul with divine fear and admiration. Hence is that word, *Heb, i i, 28.* That we

see

see by Faith, him that is invisible. As if he had said, faith is that grace that maketh things that are invisible, visible unto us. It letteþ the soul to see Christ in his relative excellencies, that what he is to us. Faith taketh up Christ as husband, and from thence we are provoked much boldnesse and divine confidence, and will all to see those rich possessions that are provided for us by our elder brother, who was born for a verity. Faith taketh up Christ as a blessed daysman that did lay his hands on us both. And from thence it is constrained to wonder at the condiscendency of Christ: It taketh him up as dying and as redeeming us from the power of the grave and from the hands of our enemies; and it provoketh Christians to make a total and absolute resignation of themselves over unto Christ, to serve him all the dayes of their life in righteousness and holiness. And thirdly, Faith maketh the soul to behold those mysterious draughts of spotless love, those divine emanations of love that hath flown from his ancient and everlasting love, since the world began. Would you know the great ground why we are so ignorant of him, who is the study of Angels, and so all that are about the Throne? Is this, we are not much in the exercise of faith. And if we would ask that question, What is the way to attain the saving knowledge of God Christ? We could give no answer to it but this. Believe, and again believe, and again believe. Faith openeth those mysterious seals of boundless perfections, and in some way teacheth

the Christian to answer to that unanswerable question, *What is his Name? And what is his sons Name?* There is this secondly, that pointeth out the sweetnesse of Faith, that it giveth an excellent relish unto the promises, and maketh them food to our souls. What are all the promises without faith (as to our use) but as a dead letter hath no life? But faith exercised upon the promises, maketh a Christian cry out, *The words of his mouth are sweeter unto me then the honey and the honey comb:* as is clear from Heb. 11. ch. 2. v. 13. It is by faith that we embrace the promises, and do receive them.

Thirdly, the sweetnesse of faith may appear by this, that it enableth a Christian to rejoice under the most anxious and afflictiong dispensations that he meeteth with whilst he is here below; as is clear from Rom. 5. 1. v. 3. where his being justified by faith hath this fruit attending it, *to joy in tribulation*, and likewise from Heb. 10. 34. 35. *both*, not faith hold the crown in his right hand, and leftheth a Christian behold these infinite dignities that are provided unto them, after they have as a strong man run their race? And when Christian is put into a furnace hotter seven times more then ordinary, it bringeth down the son of man Jesus Christ, to walk with them in the furnace, so that they walk safely, and with joy through fire and water, and (in a manner) they can have no cross in his company. For would we know what is the description of a Cross? It is *what Christ in any estate*. And would you

know what is the description of prosperity ? I
to have Christ in any condition or estate of life
What can ye want that have him ? And what
can you have that want him ? He is that all,
that all things beside him are but vanity. But be-
sides this, faith doth discover unto a Christian
that there is a sweet period of all his trials and
afflictions that he can be exposed unto ; so that
can never say that of faith which Ahab spoke
Micajah , He never prophesieth good things to me
but rather he may say alwayes the contrary , for he
never prophesieth evil unto me , it being a gra-
that prophesieth excellent things in the darke
night, and sweetly declareth, that though weeping
do endure for the evening , yet joy commeth in
morning. And that though now they go forth weep-
ping ; bearing precious seed , yet at last they shall re-
turn rejoysing , having sheaves in their bosome .
And this may bring in the fourth considera-
on, to point out the sweetnes of Faith , that
giveth a refreshing sight of that land which is
far off , and maketh him to behold that inher-
tance that is provided for the Saints in light .
It goeth forth to the brook Eshcol , and there
doth pluck down those grapes that grow in Egi-
manuels land , to bring up a good report unto
on that noble Countrey we are sojourning to-
wards , and the city , the streets whereof are pa-
ved with transparent gold . And howbeit it may
be a perplexing debate between many and their
own souls , whether or not these eyes that have
seen the windows through which so much

jeanness hath entered, and those species of lust
have been conveyed into the heart, shall once be
as of a dove washed with milk, and fitly set, and
be admitted to see that glorious object, the Lamb
that sitteth upon the Throne? Or whether ever
these tongues that have been set on fire of hell, and
these polluted lips that have spoke so much a-
gainst God and heaven, and all his people, and
interests shall ever be admitted to sing, these hea-
venly *Hallelujahs* amongst those spotless quite of
Angels, and that assembly of the first-born? Or
if these hands or feet that have been so active to
commit iniquity, and so swift to run after vanity,
shall ever be admitted hereafter to carry those
Palm branches, and follow the Lamb where ever
he goeth? Or whether ever these hearts that have
been indeed a Bethaven, a house for Idols, may yet
notwithstanding be a dwelling for the Holy
Ghost? Though these things, we say, and such
like, may be the subject of many sad debates to
some weary souls, and cause many tossings to and
fro till the morning; yet faith can bring all these
mysteries to light, and looking within the vail,
can let us see thousands of thousands, who were
once as ugly as our selves, yet now having washed
their robes, and made them white in the blood of
the Lamb, admitted to stand before the Throne
of God, and serve him day and night.

Now there is that fourthly, which we promi-
sed to speake of, concerning this grace of Faith,
from these words, and it is the absolute necessity
that is of the exercise of this grace, which is hol-

den forth in that word, *His Commandment*, which doth import these three things. 1. That all the commands that we can obey without commandment of Faith, it is but a polluting of our selves, and a plunging of our selves in ditch till our own cloaths abhor us. 2. That God taketh greater delight in the exercise of the grace of Faith, than in the exercise of any other. And lastly, that as to the many imperfection which we have in our obedience, there is a sweet act of oblivion past of them all, if we make conscience seriously to obey this command of Faith, which is indeed the sweet compend of the Gospel: all these things doth most clearly appear, that believing here is called, *His Commandment* by way of excellency, as if this were his only commandment.

But that we may yet a little more particular point out the absolute necessity of Faith, there are these things that speaketh it forth to the full. 1. That though rivers of tears should run down our eyes, "because we keep not his Law; though we should never rise off our knees from prayer; and should all our lifetime speak to God with the tongue of Angels; and though we should constantly obey his commands, yet without faith we should never escape that eternal sentence of excommunication from the presence of the Lord; there being no action that doth proceed from which can please the Majesty of the Lord, unless it hath its rise from this principle of faith; as is clear from Heb. 11. 6. *Without Faith it is*

ffable to please God. And though we should offer to him ten thousand rivers of oyl, and thousands of rams, and should offer up in a burnt sacrifice all the beasts that are upon the mountains, and the trees that are upon many hills, this should be the answer that God should return to us: Who required these things at your hands? I take no pleasure in these solemn sacrifices; because there is no way of attaining peace with God, but through the exercise of faith, making use of the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ. 2. Let us do our most by all the inventions we can, to bring down our body, and let us separate our selves from the pleasures of the flesh; yet all our Idols shall sign without much contradiction, except we do once attain unto this grace of faith, which is that victory, whereby we must overcome the world, and the hand that maketh use of infinite strength, for subduing of corruptions, making the Christian weekly to take up that song, stronger is he that is with us, than he that is in the world.

From all this that we have said, both of the excellency of Faith, and the necessity thereof, we would propose these few considerations, to two or three sorts of persons.

1. There are some who live in that vain imaginary delusion of attaining to heaven through a covenant of works, and do neglect to seek salvation by Faith in the righteousness of Christ; and those who build upon this sandy foundation, I will say but these two words. First, how long shall I labor in the fire for very vanity? Do ye ever

think to put on the cap-stone? Know you that the day is approaching, when your honour shall fall about your ears, your confidence shall be rejected, and your hope shall vanish as a dream and flee away as a vision in the night? Secondl what a monstrous blindness, and what an unspeakable act of folly must it be, to say that Christ was crucified in vain? which yet ye do practical afferr, when ye go about to purchase a righteousness through the works of the Law.

2. There are some who are secure in their own thoughts concerning their faith; they never questioned the reality of it, they never examined it. O ye whose faith is as old as your selves, ye say ye never knew what it was to dispute; and I may say ye never knew what it was to believe. Thou profane hypocrite, let me tell thee, a strong faith, and yet strong idols, must needs be a strong delusion. Thou wilt not obey the Lord: Thou wilt not pray: thou wilt not believe a threatening in all the word: Thou wilt count all Religion madness and foolishness, and yet thou wilt perswade thy self thou believest in Christ. Oh! be not deceived: God is not mocked; and why will ye mock your selves? Shall I tell you that reprobats have a sad Religion? One day they must believe, and obey, and pray, and give a testimony to godliness; but, alas! too late, and little to their advantage. Shall not he whom all the Ministers on earth could scarce ever perswade to believe so much as a Heaven or Hell, or one threatening in all the Book of God, at last be forced to believe their own sense, when they shall see the Ancient of dayes upon the

hone, and shal hear the cryes of so many thousand living witnesses come out both from Heaven and Hell, bearing testimony to the truth, of writings and promises, that not one jot of them fallen to the ground; and he would never be swayed to bow a knee to God in earnest all his life? Shall he not then pray with greatest fervency, That hills and mountains might fall upon him, cover him from the face of the Lamb? And he that would never submit to a command of God, must he not at last obey that dreadful command, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting torments? &c. Yea, he who was the greatest mocker in the world, shal then confess, that they are blest who put their trust in the Lord; as they are excellently brought in, though in an Apocryphal book, *Wisd. chap. 5. 4.* crying out with greater terror while they behold that unexpected sight of the glorious condition of the godly: O here is the men, say they, whom we mocked, whose life we accounted madness, and their end dishonorable. Be ye therefore in time, and do that willingly which ye must do by constraint; and do that with sweetness and advantage, that ye must do at last with loss and sorrow.

Thirdly, there are some who certainly have some hope of eternal life, but content themselves with a small measure of assurance; & these I would beseech, that ye would be more endeavoring to make your calling and election sure; and would be endeavoring to see your names written in the ancient Records of heaven. And this we shal press

upon you by several arguments. 1. Those strong and subtle, and soul-destroying delusions that amongst many, who conceive they do believe (as we were saying) and are pure in their own eyes, who yet are not purged from their iniquities. O are there not many of us that are in a golden dream, that suppose we are existing; but when awake, our soul is empty; whose faith is a Menephysick notion, that hath no foundation, but in apprehension? And this shall never bear through the gates of death, nor convey us into an eternity of joy. 2. May not this press you to follow after assurance, that it is the compendious way to sweeten all your crosses, as is clear from **Hab. 3. 17. 18.** where the conviction of this makes **Habakkuk** to rejoice in the God of his salvation though the fig tree did not bear fruit, and the leaf of the olive did fail, and there were no sweetness to be found in the vine. And from **Heb. 10. 34.** when they take joyfully the spoiling of their goods knowing within themselves that they had a better and an enduring substance. This is indeed the tree, which if we cast into the waters of Merath, they will presently become sweet: for is it not below the child of hope to be much anxious about these things that he meets with here, when he sincerely knoweth that commandment shall come forth: **Lift up your heads, for the day of your eternal redemption draweth near; even the day when the rivers of his sorrows shall sweetly run into the Ocean of everlasting delight?** 3. A Christian that is much in assurance, has is much in command.

on and fellowship with God ; as is clear from the Song 1. 13. 14. and Song 2. 3. where when once he cometh to that , to be perswaded what Christ is her beloved , then she sate down under his shadow , and his fruit was pleasant unto her taste ; for the assured Christian doth taste of these crums that fall from that higher Table ; and no doubt , those that have tasted of that old wine , will not straightway desire the new , because the old is better. And then , fourthly , it is the way to keep you from apostasie , and making defection from God : Faith is that grace that will make you continue with Christ in all his temptations ; as is clear from 2. Pet. 1 10. where this is set down as a fruit of making our calling and election sure , that if we do these things , we shall never fail. Faith maketh a Christian to live a dependent life : For would you know the *Motto* of a Christian ? It is this self diffidence , and Christ-dependence ; as is clear from that word in the Song 8. 5. that while we are walking through this wilderness , we are leaning upon our well-beloved. 5. This assurance will help a Christian to overcome many temptations. There are four sorts of temptations that assault the Christian : There are temptations of desire , temptations of love , temptations of hope , and temptations of anxiety , all which a Christian through this noble grace of assurance , may sweetly overcome. He that hath once made Christ his own , what can he desire but him ? As Psal. 7. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord. What can he love more then Christ , or love besides .

Christ, all his love being drowned, as it were in that Ocean of his excellencies, and a sweet complacency found in the enjoyment of him. And as to hope, will not assurance make a Christian cry forth, *Now, Lord, what wait I for mine hope is in thee.* And when the heart is anxious, doth not assurance make the Christian hear the indignation of the Lord, and patiently submit unto the cross, since there is a sweet connexion between his cross and his Crown? Rom. 8. 35. 36. *If he suffer with him, he shall also reign with him.* And lastly, there is this argument to press you to assurance, that it sweetneth the thoughts of death. It maketh death unto a Christian, not the King of terrors, but the King of desires: And it is upon these grounds that assurance maketh death refreshful unto a Christian. 1. He knoweth that it is the funeral of all his miseries, and the birth-day of all his blessed and eternal enjoyments. 2. That it is the coronation day of a Christian, and the day when he shall have that marriage betwixt Christ and him sweetly solemnized: and that when he is to step that last step, he knoweth that death will make him change his place, but not his company. And O that we could once win unto this, to seal the conclusion without presumption, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his;* We might without presumption, sing one of the Songs of Zion, even while we are in this strange land! And taking Christ in our arms, might sweetly cry forth: *Now let us then thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen*

in thy salvation. Comfort your selves in this, that all your clouds shall once pass away, and that truth shall once come to pass which was confirmed by the oath of an Angel, with his hand lifted up towards heaven, that time shall be no more. Time shall once sweetly die out in eternity, and ye may be looking after new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. O! long to be with him, for Christ longeth to have you with him.

SERMON III.

JOHN 3. 23. This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.

There are three most precious and cardinal graces which a Christian ought mainly to pursue; there is that exalting grace of Faith, that comforting grace of Hope, and that aspiring grace of Love: And if once a Christian did take up that heavenly difference that is betwixt these sister-graces, he might be provoked to move after them most swiftly, as the chariots of Aminadab. And there is this difference between these graces; Faith is a sober and silent grace: Hope is a patient and submissive grace: Love is an ambitious and impatient grace. Faith cryeth out; O my soul! be silent unto God. Hope cryeth out, I will wait patiently for the Lord, until the vision speak. But Love, it cryeth out, How long art thou a coming? And it is waiting to hear the sound

of his feet coming over the mountains of sepa-
tion. That is the Morto of Hope, *Quod deser-
non auferatur*; that which is delayed, faith Hop-
e is not altogether taken away, and made void.
And that may be the divine embleme of the
grace of Love. It is Sight, infolding Desire in
arms, and it is desire cloathed with wings, trea-
ding upon Delay and Impediments. There is
this second difference between these graces; the
grace of Faith, it embraceth the truth of the pro-
mises: the grace of Hope, it embraceth the good-
ness of the thing that is promised: but that exal-
ting grace of Love, it embraceth the Promise.
Faith cryeth out, *Hath he spoken it? he will also
do it.* Hope cryeth out, *Good is the word of the
Lord, be it unto thy servant according to thy pro-
mise.* And Love it cryeth out in an higher note,
*As is the apple tree amongst the trees of the wood so
is my well-Beloved amongst the sons.* Thirdly,
there is that difference between these graces;
Faith, it overcometh temptations: Hope, it over-
cometh difficulties; but Love stayeth at home,
and divideth the spoil. There is a sweet corre-
spondence between those graces, in this, Faith it
fighteth and conquereth: and Hope, it fighteth
and conquereth, but Love, it doth enjoy the tro-
phies of the victory. And fourthly, there is this
difference, the noble grace of Faith, it shal once
evanish into sight. That noble grace of Hope, it
shall once vanish into possession and enjoyment;
but that constant grace of Love, it shal be the ever-
companion of a Christian, and shall walk with

which him unto the streets of the New Jerusalem. And I would ask you that question, What a day shall it be when Faith shall cede to Sight? What day shall it be when Hope shall yeeld its place to Love; and Love and Sight shall eternally sit down and solace themselves in these blessed mysteries, these everlasting consolations of heaven, world without end? And fithly, there is this difference, less will satisfie the grace of Faith, and the grace of Hope, then will satisfie the grace of Love. Faith it will be content with the promise, and Hope will be content with the thing that is promised; but that ambitious grace of Love, it will be only content with the Promiser. Love claspeith its arms about that precious and noble object Jesus Christ. Love is a suspiciois grace, it oftentimes cryeth forth, They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. So fithly Faith is oftentimes put to resolve suspicions of Love. I can compare these three graces to nothing so fithly, as to those three great worthies that David had: These three graces they will break thorow all difficulties, were it an host of Philistines, that so they may pleasure Christ, and may drink of the well of Bethlehem, that well of everlasting consolation that flowereth from beneath the throne of God. Love is like Noahs dove, it never findeth rest on the sole of its foot, until once it be within that Ark, that place of repose Jesus Christ. And fithly, there is this last difference between them, Faith taketh hold upon the faithfulness of Christ.

Hope taketh hold upon the goodness of Christ, but Love it taketh hold upon the heart of Christ. And think ye not it must be a pleasant and so refreshing exercise, to be continually taken up in embracing him that is that eternal admiration of Angels? Must it not be an excellent life, daily to be feeding upon the finest of the wheat, and to be satisfied with honey out of the rock? O, but heaven must be a pleasant place! And if once we would but taste of the first ripe grapes, and a cluster of wine that groweth in that pleasant land, might we not be constrained to bring up a good report of it?

But now to come to that which I purpose mainly to speak of at this time. The last thing concerning Faith that we proposed from the words, was, the object upon which Faith exerciseth it self, which is here set down to be the *Name of his Son Jesus Christ*. And that we may speak to this more clearly, we shal first speak a little to the negative, what things are not the fit object of Faith: And then to the positive, showing how this Name of God, and of his Son Christ, is that sure ground upon which a Christian may pitch his faith. For the first, ye must know that a Christian is not to build his faith upon sense, nor sensible enjoyments. Sense may be an evidence of Faith, but it must not be the foundation of Faith. I know there are some that oftentimes cry out, Except I pat my fingers into the prints of the nails, and thrust my hand into the hole of his side, I will not believe. And indeed it is a mystery un-

the most part of us, to be exercising Faith upon naked word of promise, abstracted from sense: to love an absent Christ, and to believe on an absent Christ, are the two great mysteries of Christianity. But that sense is no good foundation for Faith, may appear. 1. That Faith which is builded upon sense, is a most unconstant, a most fluctuating and transient Faith. I know sense hath its fits of love, and as it were, hath its fits of faith. Sometimes sense is sick of love, and sometimes sense is strong in faith; but ere six hours go about, sense may be sick of jealousy, and sick of misbelief, as ye will see from Psal. 30. 6. 7. Sense that bold thing, it will instantly cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved:* but behold how soon it changeth its note; *Thou hiddest thy face, and I was troubled.* At one time it will cry forth, *Who is like unto him that pardoneth iniquity, and that passeth over transgressions?* But ere many hours go about, it will sing a song upon another key, and cry out, *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* 2. That Faith which is built upon sense, it wanteth the promise of blessedness; for this is annexed to believing, that is founded upon the word, according to that in John 20. 29. *Blessed are those that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Nor hath that Faith that is built upon sense, such a solide joy waiting on it, as Faith that is built upon the naked word of promise; as may be cleared from that word, 1. Pet. 1. 8. where Faith exercising it self upon Christ, not seen, maketh a Christian to rejoice.

rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: joy that doth not attend believing founded upon sense. 3. That Faith that is built upon sense, giveth not much glory to God: for Faith that is built upon sense, it exalteth not the faithfulness of God, it exalteth not the Omnipotency of God. I will tell you what is the divinity of sense. Let me see, and then I will believe, but it knoweth not what it is to believe upon trust, and because the Lord hath spoken in his Holiness. And in effect, Faith that is built upon sense, is no faith; even as Rom 8. *Hope that is seen, is no hope;* and therefore when the Lord seeth a Christian making sense an Idol, that he will not believe but when he seeth or seetheth, this doth often provoke the Majesty of the Lord to withdraw himself from that Christian, and to deny him the sweet influences of Heaven, and those consolations that are above, so that in an instant he hath both his sense and his faith to seek.

2. A Christian is not to make his graces the object of his Faith; that is, when a Christian doth behold love burning within him, when he doth behold influences to prayer increasing, and mortification waxing strong, he is not to build his faith upon them: this was condemned in the Church, Ezeck. 16. 14, compared with the 13. verse: *I made thee perfect with my comeliness?* but the use that thou didst make of it, thou didst put thy trust in thy beauty, and then thou didst play the harlot. It is certain that grace when it is the object of our Faith, it doth provoke God to

at the lively exercise thereof, and to make a Christian oft times have that complaint; *Wo to me, my leanness, my leanness testifieth to my face.* I will tell you three great mysteries in Christianity about grace. The first is, to ride marches between these two; not to deny what they have, and yet to be denied to what they have: Many times there is grace-denying, and not self-denying; but this is that we would press upon you, to be denied to grace, according to that which is recorded of Moses, *His face did shine, and he knew it not:* He did misken it, as it were, and was not at all puffed up with it: for so the words, we conceive, may run. Secondly, it is a great difficulty for a Christian to be denied to his self-denial, to be humble in his being humble: for if pride can have no other foundation, it will build it self upon humility; and a Christian will grow proud in this, that he is growing humble. Thirdly, it is a difficulty for a Christian to examine his growing in grace, and not to be puffed up. It is certain a Christian ought to examine his growth in grace humbly, according to that *Psal. 63. 8.* *My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me,* He doth not only take notice of this, that his soul did follow after God; but of the measure of that pursuit, *my soul followeth hard after thee;* and yet sweetly acknowledgeth it was not his own feet which carried him, nor his own hand that kept him from falling.

3. Ye are not to build your faith upon your works, and upon the righteousnesses of the Law.

I need

I need not stand long to refute that practical p^{er}son
p^{er}son that is amongst us, that thinketh we can
to heaven through a covenant of works. I tol^{ed} you, not long since, what you^{re} going to heaven
through a covenant of works speketh, even the
horrible blasphemy, that it was an act of most
stuporous folly to send Christ to die for sinners: if
you can go to heaven without him, was not
then Christ crucified in vain? And I would tol^{ed}
you now, that this speaketh out your damnable
ignorance of the weakness and deceitfulness
of your own hearts. O ye that are so great desen-
ders of Salvation by the covenant of works, I beseech you, what is the reason that ye break the
covenant of works oftener then any? For there
is none that thinketh they will go to heaven this
way, but those that are the greatest breakers of
the covenant of works. And is not that inconsi-
stent, and contradictory Divinity, your faith con-
tradiciting your practice, and your practice telling
you that your faith is a lie?

4. We must not mix our own righteousness
with Christ as the object of our believing: This
is indeed an evil that often lodgeth in the bosom
of the most refined hypocrite, when Satan can-
not prevail to exclude Christ altogether, then he
is content with that whorish Woman to divide
the child; and let the object of our Faith be half of
Christ, and half of self: And the truth is, many
of these poor unwise sons, who stay long in the
place of breaking forth of children, do willingly
hearken to this overture, for fear it be presum-
ption

ion for such poor wretches to meddle too bold-
with the riches of Christ, but it were good
such weak ones would consider that word, Rom.
8. 2. where the holy Ghost calleth the making
of his righteousness an act of submission, they
have not submitted, saith he, unto the righteousness
of Christ. O will ye not lay this to heart, that
your Lord will take your believing, or your put-
ting on his righteousness for an act of great hu-
mility, and will take your misbelief as a marve-
lous act of the highest pride and presumption?

5. We are not to make providence the object
of our faith. I know there are some that ask the
ground of their right of heaven, they will tell us
that God hath been kind to them all their dayes;
I would only say to such, He may be feeding you
into the day of slaughter, and no man knoweth love
or hatred by any thing that is before him. Thus
much of the object of Faith negatively. And
now to speak to it positively, we see the Text hol-
leth out Christ himself as that excellent and com-
plete object of Faith, This is his Commandment,
that we believe on the Name of his Son: And thus
Faith closeth with Christ under a fourfold con-
sideration. First, it closeth with God in Christ,
not with God immediately and nakedly, for he
dwelleth in light inaccessible, that no man can ap-
proach unto; He is higher than the Heaven, what
can we do? and deeper than hell, what can we
know? Job 11. — Therefore we must approach
unto him thorow a vail, even the vail of Christ
his flesh; Heb. 10. God is a consuming fire, and

of purer eyes then that he can behold iniquity, therefore we must first cast our eyes upon blessed Dayes-men that laid his hands upon us before and look unto God as in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and so draw near unto him through a Mediator, who is the first and the last, and he that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he liveth forever to make intercession for them. Secondly, Faith closeth with Christ, as tendered freely in the covenant of promise: we would have had nothing to do with Christ, if he had not been given of the Father, and offered himself in a free covenant of promise; but he being thus holden forth upon terms of free Love, which doth utterly abominate hire, and so noble a proclamation issueth forth under the great seal of Heaven, That who soever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely. Upon this the poor creature draweth near by virtue of a right, and stretching out the arms of most enlarged affections, doth run upon him with that joyful shout, My Lord, my God: and then maketh an absolute resignation of it self to him, which is holden out in the Scripture, by that sweet expression of kissing of the Son. And there are three parts of Christs blessed body that the Christian must endeavor to kiss and embrace; the mouth of Christ, the hand of Christ, and the feet of Christ. The kissing of his feet importeth the exercise of love, the kissing of his hands, the exercise of subjection, and the kiss-

of his mouth, the exercise of communion and fellowship with him. Thirdly, Faith closeth with Christ, as the purchaser and meritorious cause of all the good we receive. He is the person that hath purchased all these things unto us, and there is not one blink of love, there is for the smallest enjoyment that a Christian meeteth with, but it is the price of the blood of Christ; Christ's precious blood was laid down for it. Fourthly, Faith closeth with Christ as the efficient and worker of all our mercies; all our enjoyments are from him as the efficient cause; that is, he is the worker of all things in us, it is his precious fingers that must accomplish that blessed work of grace, and they are from Christ as the dispenser of these things. Christ is the great steward of heaven that doth communicate unto believers all the treasures of the higher House; For him hath God the Father sealed. O! but that word that Christ once spake, is much verified by himself, It is more blessed to give, than to receive. Christ is that fountain and treasure in whom all our gifts and graces are measured up; for before the blessing come to believers, they come to Christ as the head, according to that word, 2 Tim. 1. 9. Which grace was given to us in him, before the foundations of the world were laid. It was given to Christ before the world was made, and for that end, that it might be communicated unto all his members, and so out of his fulness we shall receive, and grace for grace.

But, secondly, the Text holdeth more particularly this excellent object of Faith, to be Name of his Son, *That ye believe in the Name of his Son.* And here indeed we may be at a stand. It is long since *Agar* did *non plus* all the world with that question, *What is his Name, and what is his Sons Name, if thou canst tell?* O how little a thing can be known of him? And, O how brutish is this generation that knoweth so much less, then might be known of him in such a day of the Gospel. But that we may speak a little according to our weak measure of Faith, as clothed with the Name of Christ. His Name is his glorious attributes, by which he revealeth so much of himself in the Scriptures, as poor mortals can take up. We did show you before, that there were three of these that were the main pillars of justifying Faith, *Faithfulness, Omnipotency, and his infinite Love and Mercy.* And how from these may be answered all the objections of sense, carnal reason, and of misbeliefs, arising from convictions of unworthiness. And certain it is, that faith in all its conflicts, maketh much use of the Names of Christ. And there is not an object that a poor tempted soul can make, but faith can frame an answer to it, out of some of these excellent Names of God, or of his Son Christ. It would be a more long-some work, than I intend, to tell you see this in all; But I shall only instance this in One glorious Name of God, by which he proclaimeth his glory, *Exod. 34.* The Lord, the **God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering,**

opened up.

undant in goodness and truth: keeping mercy for us, and forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, &c. I think there are seven ordinary objections which may be answered from that place. First, it is an ordinary objection which misbelievers do make, that they are under the strength of their corruption: that they are black as the Tents of Kedar, and not beautiful as the Curtains of Solomon: and doth not the first letter of that Name answer this, that he is a merciful Lord, the one importuning his ability to save, and to bring down even the highest high imagination: The other importuning is infinite delight to help those that have no strength, and are under the power of their adversaries, the power of God being of no larger except then this love? There is that second objection of misbelief, that we have nothing to commend us to Christ; but all that we have to boast, are infirmities and imperfections: and this abundantly answered from that second letter of his name, that he is Gracious, which importeth the freedom of the dispensations of his love, that he walketh not with us, according to that rule of merit; but according to that golden and excellent rule of love. It is a great dispute whether Mercy or Grace be the greatest wonder, whether the love of Christ, or the freedom of it, be the greatest mystery, sure both these put together make up a matchless wonder? Thirdly, misbelief will object that we have forsaken him dayes without

without number, and that we cannot trace our apostacy unto the first day of its rise: and not that abundantly answered from that letter his Name, that he is long-suffering? This is that glorious attribute in God, the glory of which he desireth to magnifie above all his Name. Fourthly, misbelief doth ordinarily propose this accusation, that we have multiplied our transgressions and have committed whoredome under every green tree; and have given gifts to our lovers, even sinning our ido's, so that we may take up that temptation, Is not our sin great, and our transgression infinite? And is not this also answered from that letter of his Name, that he is abundant in goodness? That though sin abound in us, grace doth much more superabound in him. confess indeed, that there are some that may wonder under that condition, that if they had no opportunity of exercise throughout eternity, but to make confession, they might confess, and never make any needless repetition. And truly in some respect it is a mercy that we are mysteries unto ourselves: for if we did know compleatly the secret abominations of our hearts, and these mysterious actings of the body of death, we would be in hazard to choose strangling and death, rather than life. Yet may not one glimpse of that abundant goodness satisfie us, and calm the storm? Fifthly, saith misbelief, we know that we have broken our vowes and covenants with God, and that these things that we have taken on, have been but as flax before the fire of temptation; so

have no hope that he will have mercy upon
those that have broken wedlock, and have not
been stedfast in his covenant: But is not that
undoubtedly answered from that letter of his
Name, *That he is abundant in truth*; which spea-
keth that, *That though we deny ourselves, yet*
abideth faithful, and doth not alter the words
that hath gone out of his mouth. It is the in-
finite blessedness of man, that though he be chan-
geable, yet they have to do with one that is an
unchangeable being. Sixthly, there is that objec-
tion, *That notwithstanding all these things are*
matters of encouragement to some, yet they know
not whether or not the lot of everlasting love
is fallen upon them, and whether their names
are in the ancient records of heaven. But this is
answered from that letter of his Name, *He kee-
th mercy for thousands*, which sheweth us that
great number of those upon whom the lot of ever-
lasting love shall fall. And if there were no other
evidence in all the Scripture, this might be a suf-
ficient matter of a song, and might make us cry
out, *Who is like unto him, whose compassions have*
no end? And who desires to magnifie his mercy
above all his works. And lastly, misbelief maketh
this objection, *They have sinned not only against*
thee, not only against vows, not only after much
joyment of God, but even after the application
of threatenings, so that they conceive, that their
Master will not have mercy upon such. Yet this is
fully answered likewise from that letter of his
Name, *He forgiveth transgression, iniquity and*

sin which three words do abundantly speak for
 that there is no transgression which he will
 pardon ; there being but one particular among
 all that innumerable number of sins which
 geth in the heart of fallen men , that he deems
 unpardonable : and there is none of our sins
 that is above the infinite art of love ; and con-
 cerning which, we can take up that complaint, *T*
is no balm in Gilead , and there is no physician
there. And though providence may muster
 many impossibilities, yet let Faith take the pa-
 tience in the one hand , and impossibilities in the
 other, and desire God to reconcile them ; *T*
is we cannot see any connexion between provi-
vidence and the word , yet may we reflect upon the
Omnipotency of God , that can make things that
are seeming contrary, sweetly agree together : the
Commentary will never destroy the Text , nor
providence will never destroy the faithfulness of
God. And let me give you this advice , that when
objections of disbelief which you cannot answer
and in a manner putteh you to a non plus ; and
when ye have looked over all the Names of God
ye cannot find an answer to them : slight them
and cover them , as we have often told you , with
the practice of believing Abraham , Rom. 4. 11
where that strong objection of disbelief appear-
ing before his eyes , the deadness of his body , and
the barrenness of Sarahs womb ; it is recorded
him , he considered not these things ; as it were ,
had a divine transition from the objections of
disbelief to the acting of faith : and this is cle-

om Matth. 15. 25. 26. where that strong objec-
tion of misbelief being proposed against that
woman, that she was not within the compass of
Christs commission, she hath a noble way of an-
swering with this; *Lord, have mercy upon me.* And
(if so we may speak) Faith hath a kind of divine
impertinency in answering the objections of mis-
belief; or rather a holy flighting of them that
wineth the victory, when cavelling with temp-
tations will not do it. The like also may be in-
stanced in his Sons Name: *O how glorious ti-
tles are given to that Prince of the Kings of the
earth, and to that Plant of renown, upon which
the weakest faith may cast anchor, and ride out
the greatest storm.* I shal not detain you long on
his subject; but this we would have you know,
that there is no straint or difficulty that a Chri-
stian can be exposed unto, but there is some
name or attribute of Christ that may sweetly
answer that difficulty, and make up that disad-
vantage. Is a Christian exposed unto afflictions
and troubles in a present world, let him comfort
himself in this, that Christ is the shadow of a
great rock in a wearied land. Is a Christian un-
der inward anxiety and vexation of mind, let
him comfort himself in this, that Christ is the
God of peace, and of all consolation. Is a Chri-
stian under darkness and confusion of spirit, let
him comfort himself in this, that Christ is the
father of lights, and is the eternal wisdom of God.
Is a Christian under the convictions of this, that
he is under the power and dominion of his lusts.

let him comfort himself in this, that Christ is *Redemption*; yea (that I stay no longer) if it were possible that a Christian could have a necessity that he could not find a Name in Christ to answer it, he may lawfully frame a Name to Christ out of any promise in all the book of God, and should find it forth-coming for the relieving and making up of that necessity, God would not disappoint his expectation.

There is yet one thing further, in reference to the object of Faith, which we shall desire you to take notice of; and it is the way of Faiths cleaving with its noble object, and its resting on him; and this we conceive may be excellently taken by our considering of the many several Names that Faith getteth in Scripture, beyond any other of the graces of the Spirit. It is called looking *Isai. 45. 22. Looking unto me.* It is called, abiding in Christ, *John 15. 4. Abide in me.* It is called, a keeping silence unto God, *Psal. 37. 7. My soul, trust in God:* or as the word is in the original, *My soul, be silent unto God:* and that in *Psal. 62. 1. My soul waiteth:* or as the word is written, *Truly my soul is silent unto God.* Likewise Faith is called a leaning, *Psal. 7. 15. I have leaned upon thee from my mothers womb.* Faith it is called, a casting of Christ's flesh, *John. 6. 53. Faith it is called, a casting of our burden upon God,* *Psal. 55. 22. Cast your burden upon God.* And Faith it is called, a coming unto God, *Matt. 11. 28. And according to these different names, there are several noble properties and matchless differences of the* *gratia*

ce of Faith. The first is, that this is the grace which a Christian doth enjoy much communion with God: hence it is called a looking, which importeth that Faith is a continual contemplation of the immortal soul upon that precious and excellent object Jesus Christ. There is that second property of Faith, that it is that grace by which a communion with God is maintained; hence it is called, an *abiding in God*. It is that grace which maketh Christ and the believer to dwell together. The third property of Faith is, that it is a most submissive grace; hence it is called, a *keeping silence unto God*. Faith as it were, knoweth not what it is to repine. It is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to misconstrue Christ. It is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to pass an evil report upon Christ. Faith it will promise good things to a Christian in the darkest night: for when Love asketh Faith that question, *Isai 21. 11. 12. Watch-men, what of the night? Watch-men, what of the night?* Or, when shal the morning break? Faith answereth it with the words that follow (only a little inverting the order) *The night cometh and also the morning*. The morning is approaching that admitteth of no following night. There is that fourth property of Faith, it is the grace that keepeth a Christian in perseverance, by its building upon the Rock: hence it is called, a *leaning upon God*: for a Christian by faith, doth perpetually join himself to Christ, so that whatever trouble he

be cast into , by Faith he cometh up out of the wilderness, leaning upon his Beloved : and by Faith he is led up to the Rock that is higher then he where he may sit in saftey , and even laugh at death and destruction, when assailing him. There is that fifth property of Faith , that it is the grace that bringeth satisfaction : to the spiritual senses of a Christian , by a close and particular application of Christ, as the nowrishment of the soul : hence it is called, an *eating of the flesh of Christ*. There are three senses that Faith satisfieth ; Faith satisfieth the sense of sight , it satisfieth the sense of taste , and it satisfieth the sense of touch. Faith will make a Christian handle that eternal Word of life. Faith will make a Christian see that noble plant of renown : and Faith will make a Christian taste and see how gracious the Lord is. And , no doubt , those that have once satisfied their sight they will be longing to satisfie their taste. There is that sixth property of Faith , it is that grace which giveth rest unto a Christian : hence it is called , a *casting of our burden upon him*. It is , as it were , the soul giving unto Christ that unsupportable yoke of our iniquities , and taking from Christ that easie and portable yoke of his commandments. And seventhly , there is that last property of Faith , it is that grace by which sanctification is promoted : hence it is called , *a coming to Christ*. It is the soul in a divine motion , and travelling from the land of Egypt , unto the land of Canaan. Faith , it is the soul in a pleasant motion from the land of the North , the land of Her

or captivity, unto the land of perfect liberty, all along going out by the footsteps of the flock, and walking in that new and living way, even in him who is the way, the truth, and the life.

And now for a more full application of this, we shall speak but two things further. 1. We would have it considered, that there are some that come unto the covenant of promise with less difficulty, and after a more divine and Evangelick way; and there are some that close with Christ in a more difficult and legal way: There are some that before they can come to Mount Sion, they must dwel fourty dayes at Mount Sinai: There are some before the decree of heaven shal be given to them, they must roar as an ox, and must cover themselves with sackcloath, having ashes upon their heads: We must be a Benoni, before we be a Benjamin; that is, we must be a son of sorrow, before we can be a son of consolation. But this is certain, that Christ leadeth sometimes home to himself through a valley of roses. And I could only have you take notice of these two, which though we conceive they be not infallible by the rule, yet oftentimes experience maketh them out to be truth. 1. That there are three sorts of persons who are most ordinarily brought under great terror ere they close with Christ. First, those who have committed some gross andominable sin that is most contradicting unto the light of nature. Secondly, that person that hath much against light before conversion; whence it is observed in all the Books of the

Gospel, and in the Book of the *Acts*, there was
more Gospel and love-way of converting
Gentils, then was of converting the Jews : 2.
Acts 2. 37. there is a sharp law exercised among
them who had crucified the Lord of life : 3.
Acts 9. *Paul* that had been a grievous persecu-
ter, at his conversion, he is first stricken dead
the ground, before he be made a captive of the
love of Christ, and constrained to cry out, *What*
wilt thou have me to do? But look to *Acts* 8. and
chap. 19. and there ye will find a more fair and
smooth way of begetting sons to Christ. And
thirdly, that person that is much in conceit of his
own righteousness, he useth to be brought to
Christ through much terror and exercise of the
Law; that is clear in *Paul*, his condition in
Phil. 3. and *Acts* 9. compared: and certain
whoever thinketh to come that length in self-
abasement, and will count, as the Apostle doth
in that Chapter, *thrust dwel many days at Mount*
Sinai, and learn his Arithmetick there. 2. We
would have you take notice of this, that though
the person that is brought to Christ in a more
smooth and Evangelical way, may have the pre-
minency of the person that is brought to Christ
after a more legal and terrible way in some things,
yet we conceive that a Christian that is brought
to Christ through much of the exercise of the
Law, and through many of the thunderings of
Mount *Sinai*, after he hath won to see his rig-
or in Christ, he is more constant in the exercise of
Faith; and the reason of it is, because that an
ordinary

ordinary ground of misbelief, is our not distinct
marking either of the time of our conversion,
which is oftentimes hid from those persons that are
converted in a more Evangelick way; as likewise
this, that those persons that are brought to Christ
in a more Gospel chariot, are sometimes put to
debates whether ever they were under the exer-
cise of the Law; and this maketh them often (as
it were) to raze the foundation, and to cry forth,
My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.
And now to shut up our discourse; we shal add
this one word of exhortation, that ye would care-
fully lay hold upon that noble object, and exer-
cise your faith upon him; and I shal say but this,
that all these that have this noble grace of Faith,
and that are heirs of that everlasting inheritance,
there is a fourfold crown prepared for you: there
is a crown of life that is prepared for him that
shal fight that good fight of Faith: but what may
you say is a crown of life, except we have joy
waiting upon that life? For what is life without
joy, but a bitterness and a burden to it self? there-
fore ye shal have a crown of joy; but what
were a crown of life, and a joy, except we had the
grace of holiness, and were compleat in that? there-
fore ye shal have also a crown of righteous-
ness: but what were life, joy and righteousness
without glory? therefore ye shal have likewise
a crown of glory: but what of all these, if that
crown should once fall from our head, and we
should be deprived of our Kingdom? therefore

take this to make up the rest, it is an eternal crown of glory. That word in Prou. 37. near close, the crown (saith Solomon) doth not end for ever; but this precious crown that the hand of Christ shal fix upon the head of an overcoming Christian, this is the motto that is engraven upon it, *Unchangeable and Eternal, Eternal and Unchangeable*. And, O what a day suppose that shal be, when that precious crown shall be put upon our heads? What think you will be the difference betwixt Christ and believers in heaven? They shal have these four crowns which are indeed one; but Christ shal have upon his head many crowns, according to that word Rev. 19. 12. But let me say one word also to you who are strangers from God, and are destitute of the grace of Christ, and will not by faith clothe with this excellent object, there is a four-fold crown that once shal be put upon your heads: but do not mis-interpret the vision, there is a difference betwixt the Butler and the Baker: ye may prophesie good things to your selves, but there is a crown of death which ye shal once have put upon your heads, ye shal be always dying, and never able to die: There is a crown of sorrow which ye shal have put upon your heads, when ye shal eternally sigh forth that sad lamentation, O to annihilate and reduced unto nothing! When the reduction of you unto nothing would be a heaven, when ye shal be tormented in those everlasting flames. And I would say this by the way

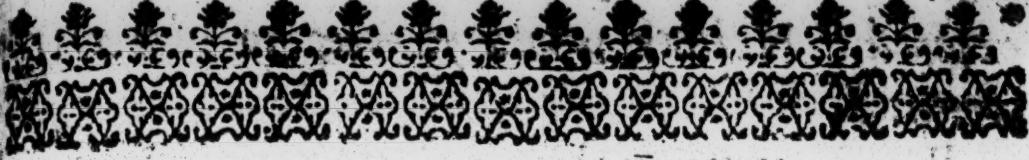
will be all miserable and comfortless one to another: there will be no ground of consolation that ye shal reap, for the community of your sorrow shal increase the degrees of that sorrow. And there is another crown also that ye shall put on, and that is *a crown of sin*, in stead of that *crown of righteousness*. Would ye know your exercise, O ye that are predestinate unto these everlasting pains? would ye know your exercise? It is this, ye shal eternally *blaspheme and curse the God that made you*. I am periwaded of this, that the terrors of hell will afflict you more, and doth, then that of the sinning perpetually in hell. You would think nothing, many of you, to be in hell, if there were no pain there; for the exercise of sin, it would be your delight and life: but be periwaded of it, that when your conscience is awaked, the exercise of sinning shal exceedingly aggravate your pain. And there is this crown, lastly, that ye shal put on, and that is, *the crown of shame*: The Prophet Isaiah maketh mention of a *crown of pride*; but you that have put on that crown of pride, you shal once put on that crown of everlasting *confusion and shame*, when you shal not be able to lift up your eyes to him whom you have pierced. I would fain desire you to know what would be your exercise at these three days, what will be your exercise when death shal be summing you to remove, and you shal first be entered heirs unto those everlasting pains. I am periwaded you will reflect much: Will ye not reflect

upon many Sermons that you have heard, wherein you have been invited to partake of the sweet offers of salvation? I remember of one that upon his death-bed cryed forth, *A world for time, world for one inch of time!* One that perhaps did hold his head high, and no doubt was greater then the greatest here: His crown would not purchase one inch of time, but dying with this, *Call time again, call time again*, that petition was denied: and so shall it be, I fear, to the most part that are here. I think it was a pretty Hieroglyphick of the Egyptians, they painted Time with three heads: the first head that painted our Time that was past, was a greedy wolf gaping: which importeth this, that our Time past was mispent, & there was nothing left, but like a wolf to gape for it again. And there was that second head of a roaring lyon round, which imports the Time present, and for this end was so painted that people might lay hold upon their present opportunities, otherwise it would be the matter of their ruine, and their eternal undoing. And there was that last head, which was of a deceitful dog fawning, which signified that people then deceive themselves with the Time to come, thinking they will be religious at their death, and that they will overcome at their death. But this is a flattery no better then the fawning of mad dog. I think we may learn much of this even to be provoked to lay hold upon our golden opportunities, that we sell not our Time, but

hat we buy it. There are two things that a Christian must not sell ; that is , sell not the Truth, but buy it ; and sell not your Time , but buy it. I am perswaded of this, that one moment of time is worth ten thousand worlds, if improved. And I would ask you , What advantage shall you have of all things that you have torment ed your selves about , when Time shall be no more ? I suppose indeed this is an ordinary evil amongst the people of this age , of which we have our own share and portion. There are many that envy godliness and the godly , the excellent ones that are in the earth , and think it is pleasure to vent their malice against such. I know that ordinary practice it is older, by a thousand years, then themselves , that they persecute godliness under the name of hypocrisy : They call godliness hypocrisy , and upon that account, they begin to speak maliciously against it. Only I would ask you this question , What will you say in that day when Christ will ask that question of you, that Gideon asked of Zeba and Zalmunnus , Who are those that you killed with your tongue ? Must it not be answered, Every one did resemble the person of a King ? O ! will you not believe ? Will you not close with Christ ? I know it is ordinary that we run upon these two extremes ; sometimes we do not believe the threatenings of the Law , & sometimes we will believe the promises of the Gospel . But I would only desire to know , what if it had been so ordered in the

infinite wisdom of God, and that all the letter of this book should have been threatenings, which should have been our lot, if all the promise should have been scraped out of it? But certainly this must be your lot, all the promises of the book of this covenant shall be taken from you, and all the curses thereof shall be a fleeing roll that shal enter within your houses, and there shal eternally remain. Know this, O you that are enemies to Christ, know it, and think upon it: Every battle of the warriour is with confused noise, and with garments rowled in blood: but that war which Christ shal have against the hypocrites in Zion, and those that are ignorant of him, and will not close with him, it shal be with fowel of fire, and eternal indignation. O! what will be your thoughts, suppose you, when Christ shal come with that two-edged sword of the fury of the Lord, to enter to fight with you? It is no delightsome exercise. O that you were not most, but altogether persuaded to be Christians and that once Christ might conquer you with that two-edged sword that proceedeth out of his mouth, that so you might subject your selves him, and make him the object of your faith. Now to him that hath engraven upon his feature, and on his thigh, that he is the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, we desire to give praise.





A SERMON

Concerning the GREAT SALVATION.

Heb. 3. 2. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?*

THIS everlasting Gospel which is preached unto you, is that glorious Star, which most lead us to the place where blessed Christ doth lie. This Gospel and glad tydings of the great Salvation, is come near unto you: And Christ is standing at the everlasting doors of your hearts, desiring that ye would open unto him. There is that one great request, which heaven this day hath to present unto you, and it is, that ye would at last embrace this great Salvation freely offered by him. It is the thing for which ye are called to mourn this day, that since the dayes of your fathers, and since the beginning of your own dayes, ye have stopped your ears from the sweet and chanting voice of this blessed Charmer. Ye would never dance to Christ when

But to come to the words which we have read unto you: The Apostle in the former Chapter, had been discovering most divinely of the matchless and incomparable excellencies which are in our Lord Jesus. And in the first verse of this second Chapter, he draweth forth an exhortation from his former doctrine, which in short is this, **That they would take heed to the blessed doctrine of the Gospel, and not at any time to let it slip out of their minds;** and that they would keep this Gospel as a Jewel of great price, and would not sell it, but that they would be induced to buy it. And this exhortation he presseth by two arguments.

The first argument is in the second verse, where he saith, **If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, &c.** That is, if the transgression of the Law which was delivered but by the ministry of angels, and every disobedience to it was so severely punished; that provoke you to take heed that ye transgress not the precious Gospel which was spoken by the Lord himself.

The second argument in the words which have read unto you, & it is taken from the certain and infallible stroke of the justice of God, which shall come upon those who slight this great Salvation; It is impossible; saith he; that there

is a City of refuge for those who slight this great
Salvation.

Now in the words which we have read, there
are these six things to be considered.

I. First, that it is an evil incident to the heart
of this precious Gospel and great Salvation,
to slight and undervalue it : This is clearly pre-
supposed in the words ; otherwise there had been
no ground or access for the Apostle to threaten so
terrible things against the slighters of it.

II. The second thing to be considered in the
words, is , that the stroke and ruine of those who
slight this great Salvation, is certain and infalli-
ble, it will surely come upon them : This is clear
from these words , *How shal we escape?* As if he
had said , There is no imaginable way for us to
escape , if we neglect (this) so great salvation.
We may have a city of refuge when we are pur-
sued by the Law , or when we are pursued by af-
flictions ; and we may escape when we are pur-
sued otherwayes by the Justice of God : but if
once we slight this great Salvation, there remain-
eth no city of refuge (no door of escape left
open) unto us : for where will the person flee that
slighteth this great Salvation ?

III. There is this third thing whereof we
will take notice from the words, that the stroke of
the Justice of God cometh justly upon them who
slight this great Salvation : and truly it is a most
equal and reasonable stroake , which is also clear
from the words , *How shal we escape, if we neglect
great salvation?* Where he puts it home to
their

their consciences, as if he had said : think ye not that it is just and righteous, that if ye slight this great salvation, there should not be a door of escape left open unto you. He putteth the question home to their conscience, to answer, yea or no.

IV. The fourth thing to be considered in the words, is this, that the slighting this great Salvation is a sin that hath many aggravations which attend and wait upon it. And it hath two great aggravations from the words which I have read the first great aggravation in that word of the Text, *great salvation*; as if he had said, If it were not a great Salvation, you might have some cloak or excuse for your slighting of it : but seeing it is such a great and eternal Salvation, there is no cloak left for your sin. The second aggravation is from the certainty of this Salvation, in these words, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those that heard him, viz. his Apostles; whereby he tells them, this great Salvation is no notion nor fancy, but a most certain, sure and real salvation which yet they slight.

V. The fifth thing whereof we shal take notice from the words, is this, That there are persons (be who they will, Minister, or people who slight this great Salvation, that shal have no door of escape. Hence is it that the Apostle putteth himself amongst the rest, saying : How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? that is, How shall I Paul escape, if I neglect so great

ation, and so frustrat the grace of God?

VI. Sixthly, we would take notice of this in the words, that not only heart-despising of this great Salvation, but even also the very neglecting of it, hath a certain infallible and unspeakable ruine attending upon it.

Now before we begin to speak to any of these six things (which we have observed from these words) there are these two things whereunto we shall speak a little for clearing of the words. First, what is meant here by great Salvation. Secondly, how it is said that Christ was the first preacher of it.

First, we conceive that by the great Salvation understood the Gospel, as is clear, Eph. 1. 13. where it is called, the *Gospel of our salvation*; and Acts 13. 26. it is called, *the word of this salvation*; that by the word of this salvation, is understood the Gospel, and those precious offers which are contained in it. And we conceive it may be called a great salvation, in these eight respects.

I. First, it is called the great Salvation in respect of the price which was laid down for it; there being no less price laid down to purchase this great Salvation, than the blood of the Son of God. From whence then doth Salvation flow into you? It comes running to you in a stream of the blood of the Son of God: This is clear, Heb. 9. 12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once unto the holies, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

II. Secondly, it is called a great Salvation in respect

respect of the many difficulties and opposition which ly in the way of bringing it about. What great impediments, suppose ye, lay in Christ's way before he could accomplish and bring about this great salvation? Was not the justice of God to be satisfied? Was he not to die, and to be made like unto one of us? Was he not to ly in the grave? And was he not to bear the torment of hell before this great salvation could be accomplished and brought to pass? There were such impediments in the way of bringing about this great salvation, that if all the Angels in heaven had been set to work, they had been all crushed under it; had it been but that one great impediment to satisfy the justice, and pacify the wrath of God, even that was a pass, through which none could go but the eternal Son of God. It was so guarded, that none durst adventure to enter it (much less could any win through it) save he only who was mighty to save.

III. Thirdly, it is called a great salvation, respect of that high estimation which the saints have of it. O what an high estimation have the saints of this gospel-salvation! There is no mercy which they think comparable to this; all other mercies are but little Zoars, in comparison of this great mercy and gospel-salvation.

IV. Fourthly, it is called a great salvation, respect of those noble effects which this salvation bringeth about and produceth. Some of the great effects of the gospel, David hath clearly set down in Psal. 19. 7, 8. 9. 10. Is not this a great effect of

his Gospel-Salvation, to bring us out of nature
to an estate of grace? And that is an effect of
his great Salvation. Is not this a great effect to
make us who were enemies, become friends?
And that is an effect of this great Salvation. Is
not this a great effect to make us who were mo-
ving in the way to hell, move in the way to hea-
ven? And that is an effect of this great Salva-
tion. Is not this a great effect, to make us who
were so far off, to be now made near? And yet
that is an effect of this great Salvation. And is
not this a great effect, to make us who were dark-
ness, become light in the Lord? And that is the
great effect of this Gospel-Salvation. Yea, I may
y time would fail me to tell of all the great ef-
fects of this great Salvation. But, O will ye
come and see, and that will best resolve the que-
stion unto you, what the noble effects of this
great Salvation are.

V. Fifthly, it is called a great Salvation, in re-
spect of the great advantages which doth redound
to the person who embraceth it. First, is not hea-
ven a noble advantage? And that is the gain
which attendeth the embracers of this great Sal-
vation. Secondly, is not Jesus Christ a notable
advantage? And yet he is the advantage which
attendeth the embracers of this great Salvation.
Thirdly, is not eternal communion with God a
noble advantage? And that advantage attendeth
the embracers of this great Salvation. Fourthly,
is not eternal liberation from the body of death a
great advantage? And that attendeth the em-
bracers

bracers of this great salvation. Fifthly, is eternal singing in the enjoyment of God a great advantage? And that attendeth the embracers of this salvation. Sixthly, is not eternal seeing God, as he is, a great and noble advantage? And yet this (as all the former) attendeth the embracers of this great salvation. Yea, would ye be rich? O then embrace this great salvation. Would ye be honorable? Come and embrace this great salvation. Would ye be eternally happy? O come then and partake of this great salvation.

VI. Sixthly, it is called a great salvation, in respect of all other salutations that ever were accomplished. There was never a salvation or victory obtained by any General or Captain (of a land or people) that could have the name of great salvation, in comparison of this.

VII. Seventhly, it is called a great salvation in respect of the authority of it: We have taken of the greatness (as to the meritorious cause of it, and how great things it doth effectuate; also in respect of the authority of it, it is a great salvation. Would you know who is the Author of this great salvation? It is Christ, Heb. 5. He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him. And must not this salvation be suitable to him who is the Author of it? He is one of the most noble and radiant beams of the majesty of the Son of God the Mediator, he is the Author of this great salvation.

VIII. Eighthly, it is called a great salva-

respect of the continuance and duration of it. is not a salvation which is but for a day: but is an eternal salvation, *Heb. 9. 12.* He obtained eternal redemption for us.

Now the second thing whereunto we shall speak for clearing of the words, is this, *viz.* How is said that Christ was the first preacher of his eternal salvation. We do not think that the words are to be understood, that the Gospel and his great salvation was never preached before Christ came in the flesh: but we think the meaning of the words may be one of these three, if not all of them.

I. First, that all the preaching of this great salvation under the Law, did come very far short the point of fulness, in comparison of Christ's preaching of it; therefore is Christ said to be the first preacher of this great salvation: as if he had said, I know Adam he preached of this great salvation, and Enoch he preached of this great salvation, and the twelve Patriarchs they preached this great salvation; and all the Prophets who went before Christ, and are now in heaven, they preached of this great salvation: but all their preaching deserved not the name of preaching, in comparison of Christ's: for never man spake as he spake. Thus Christ was the first great preacher of this great salvation.

II. Secondly, this may be the meaning of it, that Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation, in respect of his clear way of preaching it: for he was the first preacher of it without types.

types and shadows : He was the first preacher, it clearly and fully, with so much demonstration and power of the Spirit.

III. Thirdly, the meaning of this (Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation) may relate to his appearing to Adam in Paradise, when he became the first and greatest preacher of this salvation, when he did speak that word unto him, *The seed of the woman shall tread down the head of the serpent.* The first serious preaching of this great salvation was when Christ preached to Adam in Paradise. And this was the first and glorious morning of this blessed Gospel.

Now we shall speak a little to the first of these six things which we have observed from these words, viz. That there are many within the visible Church who are neglecters and slighters of this great salvation: (Do ye not all take it?) it is clear, *Math. 23.* towards the close, *chap. 22. 5.* where those persons being invited to come to the marriage, or feast of the Gospel, said of them, *they made light of it;* which are the same words in our Text: And *Luke 14.* where they were invited to come, it is laid, *all with one consent began to make their excuse.* And *Isai. 28. 2.* *This is the rest wherewith ye shall make the weary to rest, this is the refreshing, but they will not hear.* Now is there a person in the world who dare deny this charge, that he is a slighter of this great salvation? I confess, I am afraid, that you will not take with it; therefore I shall pro-

These eight sorts of persons who are slighters of this great salvation: and charge you, as you will answer to God one day, that you search your hearts whether you be amongst the number (in the catalogue) of the slighters of this great salvation.

I. The first sort of persons who are slighters of this great salvation, are those persons who go about to establish their own righteousness; and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ: in a word, it is that sort of persons who think they may win to heaven by a covenant of works, and will not take the Gospels way of travelling to heaven in the covenant of grace. And surely there is not a person here who hath not that cursed inclination to be as little obliged to Christ for his salvation, as he can: We would go to heaven without the way, which is Christ. And, believe me, there are many in this Congregation who go thus about to establish their own righteousness. And I shall propose six sorts of persons who fall under this first rank.

I. The first sort, are those who rest on their own civility, and think that will carry them to heaven: those are the persons who go about to establish their own righteousness. Say they, If I den the world to say any thing to me, I was ever more an honest man, and I trust therefore that I shall go to heaven. But I say to thee, O Atheist! Great thou art, thou shalt never win to heaven by those means, till thou come to Christ with this, *My righteousness are as filthy rags.*

2. The second sort, are those who build a confidence upon their denial of their good works, but yet never come this length to make use of such Christ.

13. The third sort, are those who build their confidence upon their duties: they think they will come to Heaven by their good prayers, by their reading, and by their fasting, like unto the Pharisee, Luke 18. 11. *I thank God, I am not like other men, for I fast twice in the week: I pay tithes of all that I possess.* But I say unto thee, thy duty will never bring thee to Heaven, if Christ be not the end of all thy duties, nor can you perform duty without him.

4. The fourth sort of persons who fall under this first rank of slighters of the great salvation are those who trust on their convictions. If they have once been convinced of their sin and miserable estate, they think there is no more to Christ will never reject them; so they sit down and build their hope upon these convictions.

5. The fifth sort of persons, are those
build their confidence upon their resolutions;
they, oftentimes have I resolved to be a
man then I am; therefore I think (which is
first delusion of many) that God will accept
will for the deed: but it had been good for me
such a word had not been in the Bible, or if
their cursed eyes had never read it. But know
this, that though thou hadst as strong resolution
as Peter, or as good wishes as Balaam had, if
never labor to bring them to practice, God

by to thee, Depart from me, I know you not. Any of you who build upon your resolutions, you will build upon a sandy foundation, these being many times a goodness, but like the morning dew.

6. And the sixth sort of persons who fall under this first rank of slighters of this great salvation (and wherein the evil is most subtil) are those who build their salvation upon their graces; these also go about to establish their own righteousness. But I say to such, their graces cannot be the foundation of their hope, although they may be as evidences to strengthen their hope. Now, are there none here who fall under this first rank of slighters of the great salvation? Or are there none here who will confess they have gone about to establish their own righteousness? I say to thee who wilt confess, put a rope about thy neck, and come to Christ; for he is a merciful King. I say to thee, come to Christ with this, All my righteousness is like filthy rags. And if thou wilt come with this in sincerity, he shall say, Bring forth the white robe, and put it upon him. If thou canst be brought to speak that in sincerity to Christ, there shall be no more betwixt Christ and thee, but, Come and cloath him with the white robe.

II. Secondly, those persons slight the great salvation, who delay their taking hold of the precious offers of the Gospel: for there are many when we preach this Gospel, and when we hold out the great Salvation unto them, who say, I will follow Christ, but I must first go home.

*A Sermon concerning
and bury my father; and so they delay to take hold
of this great Salvation. But I say to you, wh
ever you be, that thus delay to take hold on the
great Salvation, you are the slighters of it. Is
there a person within these doors, who dare but
acknowledge that he hath slighted this great Sa
vation, and delayed to embrace it? O! tell me
what do your consciences speak? Are there any
but they must acknowledge they come under the
second rank? And I say to you who have thus
delayed, will you yet embrace it? I say even
unto you who are old men, now past sixty years
and have slighted this great Salvation so long
yet this day this great Salvation is offered unto
you. What say you to it? O! what do you say
to this offer? Are ye saying, I must now delay
and not receive this great Salvation, till mi
harvest be by and over? I say unto thee, that
the harvest of the wrath of God is ripe, and
shalt put in his fickle, and cut thee down. I
say no more to those who thus slight this great
Salvation, but this, *Why stand ye all the day
in the market place idle, and doing nothing?* O! will
you be at last induced to take and embrace
this great Salvation, before it be hid from your
eyes.*

III. Thirdly, those persons are the slighters
of this great Salvation, who complement with
Christ when they are invited to come and
take of it, and say silently to the Minister, or
ther to their own conciences: *I pray you, having
excused as this time; as those, Luke 14. 18.*

would only ask of such, Have you any lawful excuse why you will not come and partake of this great Salvation ? Is there any person here that hath any lawful excuse to present ? I shall never take that off your hand, Have me excused. But be sure of this, I shall never excuse you, but accuse you : therefore I desire that those persons who have slighted the great salvation, by complementing with Christ, that they would complement no more with him at all, but now embrace it.

IV. The fourth sort of persons who slight this great Salvation, are those who give way to discouragements and unbelief, so that they will not come and partake of this great Salvation : I say, such of you are slighters of it, and Christ will esteem you such. Oh, if ye knew the worth and virtue of this great Salvation, there would be a temptation you could meet with, that would hinder you from embracing it ! But if you couldst not answer these temptations, thou couldst not own them : I say unto such under-
valuers and slighters of the great Salvation, as dis-
couraged persons (And those who stay long in the
time of the breaking forth of children) that when
you cannot answer your objections, which hin-
gareth you from closing with Christ, I intreat
you, disown them, as if ye heard them not. Say
, Think ye this lawful ? I say, it is both lawful
and expedient ; for it was the practice of belie-
ving Abraham ; He considered not his own body
being dry as an old stick, nor the deadness of

A Sermon concerning
Sarah's womb. He did not consider these things
which might have been objections to keep him
from believing. He might have started at these
two objections; Alace! I am old: and that ob-
jection could he not answer: And my wife is past
child-bearing; neither could he answer that ob-
jection. What then did he with them? He slighted
them both, and considered them not. Second-
ly, I would say this to you who thus slight it, be-
cause of discouragements: If ye did know the
worth of the great Salvation, which is in this Go-
spel-redemption that is offered to you, although
ye had an army of objections to go through, ye
would go through them, to get a drink of the water
of this Well of Bethlehem.

V. The fifth sort of persons who slight the
great Salvation, are those who will not do
much as take care and give pains to hear the
great Salvation offered unto them: For there are
some persons, who (if they come to the Church)
desire to sit farthest off, and so never take care to
hear a word of this great Salvation; and such are
dreadful slighters of it. Like unto these men-
tioned, Jer. 6. 10. *To whom shall I speak, and give*
warning that they may hear? Behold their ear is un-
circumcised, and they cannot hearken. Issi. 28. 12. b
But they would not hear. Jer. 7. 10. *Who say, we are*
delivered to do all these abominations: Yet they do
come and stand before him, in the house which is
called by his Name.

VI. Sixthly, those persons are slighters of the
great Salvation, who, when they hear it, are

are (nay not so much) affected with it, then if we were telling unto them the most senseless history of *Thom is the Kymer*, or some other old tale. Like unto these mentioned, *Jer. 6.10.* *The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it.* I would pose you all, as in the sight of the Author of this great Salvation, man or woman, did you ever see your selves; or took ye ever pains, to bring up your hearts to the love of this great Salvation? Was it ever the joycing of your hearts, that Christ died and rose again? I do certainly believe it, and I am swayed, that there are decrees past in heaven, against many of you, *That in hearing ye shall hear, and not understand; and in seeing, ye shall see, and not perceive.* For God hath made your hearts harder then the flint or adamant, so that ye shall have no return when he doth exhort you. Believe me (if I may so speak) I think there is as much probability that the stones in the wall should hear (if we would speak to them) as there is many of you.

VII. Seventhly, those persons are slighters of this great Salvation, who never did complain that they wanted a right to this great salvation. I hope some of you are now convinced, that ye never came within the compass of this great salvation. I say yet unto you, if ye did never spend one hour in secret weeping and lamenting, because ye had not a right to this Gospel redemption, it is but too probable you had never yet a right to it. Yea, know it, that such of you would

little care to let precious Christ depart with any grief of heart. I think, if this were voice within this house to day, Whether or not shall Christ go and depart? I doubt if there would be many heart-dissenters, though many tongue-dissenters. Oh! I fear there would be many hearts here, saying: O Christ! depart, and go thy way: Yea, there are many Gadarens here, who prefer their kine and swine to precious Christ, and would beseech him to go out of their coasts.

VIII. Eightly, those persons slight the great Salvation, who never took pains to engage their hearts to take hold of Christ and the Gospel. Christ is near to you this day; The great Salvation is near to you, and is now, even now offered unto you; therefore are there any who will take pains to lay hold on it? I obtest you all who are here, by the beauty and excellency of him who is the Author of this great Salvation, that ye come and partake of it. I obtest you by all the joyes of heaven, that ye embrace this great salvation. I obtest you by all the terrors in hell, that ye embrace it. I obtest you by the promises of the everlasting covenant, that ye embrace it. I obtest you by all the curses that are written in this book the covenant, that ye embrace it. I obtest you by the love you owe to your immortal souls, that will once be wise, and come partake of the great Salvation. May I now have it, sayest thou? Yet I say unto you all, ye may have it to day; ye may be partakers of it before ye go hence. And so before I proceed any further, I do in the Name of

uthority of him who sent me here to day, and is the Author of this great Salvation, freely offer it unto you to day. But I know there will be eight sorts of humors within this house to day, in relation to this great Salvation which is now offered unto you.

1. I think there will be some of *Gallios* disposition here to day, that will care for none of these things: yea, there are many here that will not give a fig for the rich offer of the great Salvation. But I say, cursed be that person who putteth on *Gallios* temper to day, that will care for none of these things.

2. I fear there will be many of *Pilats* humor here to day, who will say, they find nothing against the man, yet will cry forth, *Take him, and crucifie him.* They find no fault with Christ, and yet will be content that he be crucified. Now can ye say any thing against Christ, who is the Author of this great Salvation? Produce your strong arguments. Are there any here who have any thing to say against him? I am here to answer in his Name. I hope there is not one here who hath any thing to say against the Author of this great Salvation: And why then do ye not take him? See unto your selves that there be none of *Pilats* humor here to day, that will cry out, *They find nothing in Christ why he should not be received,* and yet will be content that he be crucified.

3. There will be many of the *Jews* humor here to day, who cry forth, *Away with Christ,*

*A Sermon concerning
away with Christ, and give me Barabbas. But,
oh! what a hellish word is that, Away with spot-
less Christ, away with transcendent Christ, and
give us the world? Now are there any here who
will be so gross slighters of this great salvation?
Will ye slight this great salvation, and embrace
your idols, which shall once prove a crown of
thorns unto you.*

4. There will be some of Felix humor found
here to day, that will say, *O Christ, go away at
this time; and I will hear thee at a more convenient
season.* But I say unto you, who will not hear me
to day, nor embrace this great salvation, I shall
defy all the Ministers in Scotland to assure you,
that ye shall get another offer, if ye send me away
to day. There is not one that can or dare engage
that the great salvation shall be in your offer any
more. Therefore, I say, let none of Felix tem-
per be here to day, that will say, *They will hear
Christ at a more convenient season.*

5. There will be some of Balaams temper to
day, who will desire to die the death of the righ-
teous, and to have their last end like his; yet they
desire not to live the life of the righteous. But I
say unto you, ye shall never die the death of the
righteous, if ye live not the life of the righteous.

5. There will be some of you here to day,
who, I hope, at least will be of Agrippas humor,
that will say, *Thou hast almost persuaded me to be
a Christian.* I say unto thee, *O wilt thou quickly
out with that word almost, and put in that word
also.*

the great salvation.

together and say, O precious Christ ! thou hast
together persuaded me to be a Christian. How-
ever, if thou come no greater length, I intreat
thee come this length, that so thou mayest cry
out, I am almost persuaded to embrace Christ the
great Salvation ; and may be ere long ye will
come further.

7. There will be some of Judas temper here
to day, who will betray Christ for thirty pieces of
silver ; yea, some would sell Christ, heaven, their
idols and all, for less then thirty pieces of silver.

8. I think there will be many of Esau pro-
line temper here to day, who will sell their birth-
right for a mess of pottage. Now will ye enquire
at your selves, Am I the person that will give my
birth-right for a mess of pottage ? Doth mine
heart say, I will sell my birth-right, because I am
hungred, and ready to die ? What will it profit me,
give me a mess of pottage, and I will quite my
birth-right ? I know there are not a few such
here to day : therefore I intreat you, enquire at
your selves what is your humor. Oh ! shall the
great Salvation that ye have slighted so long,
be slighted this day also ? And shall there be none
embrace it ? Oh ! enquire, and stand in awe,
lest the wrath of the most High pursue you.

9. Now I shal give you these seven considera-
tions, which may provoke you, not to slight, but
embrace this great Salvation.

10. 1. The first consideration, that the not em-
bracing this great salvation, is one of the greatest
acts

acts of folly that can be, *Jer. 8. 9.* They have rejected the word of the Lord: and immediately is he subjoined; *And what wisdom is in them?* And so Solomon doth assure you, they cannot be wise who neglect this great Salvation, *Prov. 1. 7.* Fools despise wisdom and instruction. Therefore may I not say unto you, be ye who ye will, though ye were the greatest heads of wit in all this place, ye are but stark fools, as long as ye neglect this. But would you be wise indeed, and wise unto eternal life? Then I intreat you, come and embrace this great Salvation.

2. The second consideration to provoke you not to slight the great salvation, is this, that the ruine and destruction of the slighters of it, is most certain and infallible, *Jer. 11. 11.* where speaking of slighting the covenant, which is indeed the same great salvation, there is a therefore, ~~per~~ to the threatening. Therefore thus saith the Lord, *I will bring evil upon them, which they shall be able to escape.* I defy you all, who are the slighters of this great Salvation, to find a back-door, when Justice shall pursue you; for there is no door to escape, if ye embrace not this great Salvation, but the earth will disclose your iniquity, and heaven will declare your sin.

3. Thirdly, let this consideration provoke you not to slight this great Salvation, that Christ is exceeding serious and earnest that ye should embrace it: And I think that *Isai. 28. 23.* speaketh out his exceeding seriousness, where for 45

imes he beggeth of his hearers, that they would give ear and hear his voice, saying: Give ears and hear my voice: hearken; and hear my speech. What needeth all these exhortations, but that Christ is most serious that they would embrace the great Salvation? And, O that there were a person here to day, as serious to the bargain as Christ is! But be who ye will, that slight this great Salvation, believe me, the day is coming wherein ye shal cry out: Alace, for my slighting of it! Wilt thou therefore think presently with thy self, O thou slighter of this great Salvation! What wilt thou say of thy slighting it? When the devil shal be leading thee in thorow these dark gates of hell, O slighter of the Gospel! how many alaces wilt thou cry, when thou shalt be passing thorow these dark gates into thy everlasting prison? Wilt thou no: then cry out, O me, a slighter of the everlasting salvation! whether am I now going? Alace, now for my slighting of the Gospel! And as thou passest thorow, thou shalt meet with numbers of miserable comforters. There is not one in that prison, who can comfort thee; but many dreadful alaces shal thou then both cry and hear, if thou embrace not this great Salvation.

4. Fourthly, let this provoke you not to slight the great Salvation, that ye will get it for a very look. O ye within this house to day, ye will get this great Salvation for one look, *Isai. 45.22. Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of*

*A sermon concerning
of the earth: For a very look ye will get this
great Salvation: and do ye ever think to get
heaven at a lower rate?*

5. The fifth consideration to provoke you not to slight this great salvation any more, is this, There is not one of you who is a slighter of it, but your slighting it shal increase your immortal bonds. Man or woman, be who thou wilt, when thou art slighting this great Salvation, thou art but platting a cord wherewith to bind thy soul eternally in these unquenchable flames, *Isai. 28.*

22. Be ye not mockers, lest your bonds be made strong. I say therefore unto you, old men, mock not, lest your bonds be made strong. Old women, near unto your graves, mock not, lest your bonds be made strong. Young men, be ye not mockers, lest your bonds be made strong. Young women, who are in the flower of your time, mock not, lest your bonds be made strong. But now, alace! will there for all this, be a perlon here to day who will be a mocker of this great salvation.

6. The sixth consideration to provoke you not to slight this great salvation any more, is this: Ye know not but that your days may be near unto a close. I say you know not but the day of the preaching of this great salvation may be near unto a close. What knowest thou, O man, or woman! but this shal be the last Sermon that ever thou shalt hear concerning this great salvation. And yet for all this, shall we be sent away with one consent to embrace or receive it? O wil you

be persuaded to look to Christ, and so to take him?

7. The seventh consideration to provoke you not to slight the great salvation, is this, That there is a five fold salvation comprehended under this great salvation.

1. The first is this, Come and partake of this great salvation, and thou shalt have salvation from thine idols: And hereby I do proclaim liberty this day unto captives: I am sent forth this day with the keyes of your prison house, to open your prison doors unto you, if ye will embrace this great salvation. I say unto you, O ye prisoners, come forth and shew your selves; for the keyes of your prison house are with us, to open your prison-doors unto you; therefore, O come forth, and embrace this great Salvation! Will there be any (shal I think) here, that will refuse to come forth? O b^o go forth and flee from the land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage.

2. Thou shalt have salvation from thy darkness and from thine ignorance. I say unto you who understand no more of God nor the stones of the wall, I command you come forth, and partake yet of this great salvation, and unto you light arise, even the day-spring from on high shall visite you.

3. If ye will come and partake of this great salvation, ye shal have deliverance from all your fears. Dost thou fear that thou shalt be poor? Come and partake of this great salvation, and thou shalt be delivered from it. Art thou afraid

afraid of hell? Come and partake of this great Salvation, and thou shalt be delivered from that fear. Art thou afraid at the wrath of God? Then come, I say, and partake of this great Salvation, and thou shalt have redemption from that and all thy fears. *With him is plenteous redemption, and he can make thee quiet from the fear of evil.*

4. If thou wilt come and partake of this Salvation, thou shalt have deliverance from all thine anxieties, and from all thy cares. Ye are now careful and anxious about many things; come, and partake of this great Salvation, and it will make you careful, but only for the one thing necessary.

5. If ye will come and embrace the great Salvation offered unto you this day, ye shall be helped before ye go hence, to sing that Song, *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?* Now, *O* will ye come and embrace this great Salvation, *And ye shall be more than conquerors thorow Christ who loveth you?* And there therefore anie here to day, that would have victorie over the devil, and over their own heart? Then come and embrace this great Salvation, and then your victorie is certain.

But now to press home this great Salvation upon you a little further, there are nine persons who are invited to come and partake of this great Salvation offered this day. And I charge you, answer to your names when ye are called, and delay not to come.

1. First, I invite and call here to day, all who are willing to come and embrace this great salvation. Now, are there anie of you here to day, who are called *willing*? Then I invite you to come and embrace this great salvation. Rev. 22. 17. *Whosoever will, let him come.* But, oh ! are there none here to day, who are named *willing*? I intreat you, if there be anie, do not denie your name, but come when you are called, and embrace this great Salvation.

2. Secondly, those persons who thirst for it, are invited to come, and partake of this great salvation, Rev. 22. 17. *Let him that is athirst, come.* Now if there be any here who are named *thirsty*, let them come and partake of this great salvation, and they shall be satisfied.

3. Thirdly, are there any money-less folk here to day? Let them come and partake of this great salvation. Are there no money-less folk here to day? I mean not that money or coin in your purses, but want ye money? That is, want ye *righteousness*? Then I pray you come and partake of this great salvation. I say, are you so poor that ye have nothing but the fear of hell? Then I pray you come. If there be any here who hath nothing to commend them to Christ, but necessity? I say unto all such, *O come, come, come*, and partake of this great salvation.

4. Fourthly, those persons are invited to come, (and I wish there were many such) who are *weary*; but oh ! Are there none here to day who are called *weary*? Are you not weary in pursuit

suit of your sins? If there be any such here to day, I say unto you, O weary folk, Come, come, come, and partake of this great salvation, and of this excellent Gospel-redemption that was purchased at so dear a rate.

5. Fifthly, Those who are heavy loaden are invited to come, (and I think all of you may answer to this name) are you heavy loaden? O then come! But are there none here who are heavy loaden with sin, with misery, and estrangement from God? If there be any such here, I say unto thee, old men, or young-men, be who thou wilt, O come and partake of this great salvation.

6. Sixthly, Are there any here to day who are called blind? I say, if there be any of you who think you want eyes to see the precious excellencies of Christ, I invite you to come and partake of this great salvation.

7. Seventhly, Are there any who are called lame here to day? I say unto such, O come, come, come, and partake of this great salvation; for we are sent forth to day to call in the blind and the maimed, and the lame, that they may come and embrace this great salvation; therefore are there none here to day who may be called such? Are you neither blind nor lame? I hope many of you will not deny that you are such; therefore I say unto you, O blind, halt, and maimed, Come, come, and partake of this great salvation.

8. The eighth sort of persons invited, are those who are sick; therefore if there be any sick folk here to day, be who you will, I say unto you, O

come and partake of this great salvation ; for the whole need not the Physician, but the sick.

9. Ninthly, Are there any here to day who know not their name, or their condition ? I say unto you, O nameless folk, come and partake of his great salvation ; Come to Christ for the knowledge of your souls condition : Come as a nameless one, and he shall not reject thee ; though by cause were so evil that thou couldst not give it name ; for of all that come unto him, he sendeth none away.

Now where do you find your name and surname ? O do you not know it ? I hope now you may know ; therefore I intreat you answer to it, & come away, and partake of this great salvation.

But I am afraid there be many strong iron bars in the way of some of you, which you cannot win over. Ah, how fast are some souls locked in Satans share ! And therefore I shall speak a little for discovering of those bars that hinder from embracing his great salvation, that so you may be the better helped to remove them.

I. The first great iron bar which keepeth folk from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of ignorance ; and I am afraid that this (as a mighty bar) hindereth many of you : You are ignorant of yourselves, and of the condition of your souls ; you are ignorant of the Law, and of its severity, and you are ignorant of the precious Gospel in its condescendency. O pray unto God, that for Christs sake, he would break that great bar of ignorance ; for till that be done, Christ may take

up

up that complaint, Jer. 5.4. Surely they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I say this bar of ignorance keepeth you from embracing this great salvation.

II. The second bar which keepeth many from closing with Christ, is, the bar of presumption; for some will cry out, What need have I to embrace the great salvation? Have I it not already? But I say unto thee, O fool, thou art, by all appearance, yet in bondage. O that this evil bar of presumption were put away; for it is one of the greatest impediments which lieth in the way of our embracing this great salvation that is in your off to day: Therefore I say unto you, if you will come no further, I intreat you, come this length to confess that you want this Gospel-salvation, and that you are indeed strangers to this Redempio purchased by Christ.

III. The third bar that keepeth persons from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of unbelief: you believe not what we say to you about this great salvation. I know that some of you are of the Stoicks and Epicures humor, who cry out, What meaneth this man? He seemeth to be the selfe forth of some strange God. But I say unto you, I am not the selfe forth of any strange God, but I am Jesus of Nazareth whom I preach unto you. Alace! some of you think this great salvation to be some morning dream, or some golden fancy. But I say unto you, it is neither a dream, nor fancy; but a real truth that we preach unto you.

IV. The fourth bar that keepeth persons from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of *dis-mouragement*; this strong bar keepeth many so fast, that they cannot embrace this great salvation, though it be freely offered unto them. I shal say no more to you who are such, but counsel you to do as those four Lepers did, 1 Kings 7. 4. who sat at the gate of *Samaria*, who said; *Why sit we here till we die? If we say; we will enter in the City, then the famine is in the City, and we shall dye there: and if we sit still here, we dye also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the Host of the Syrians; if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but dye.* Even so lay I unto you, that if you abide in the state of unbelief, you shall surely be undone; therefore go forth, for you know not but God may work a great salvation for you: and if you will quite your unbelief, and close with Christ in the offer of this great salvation (by Faith) you shall have no more to do, but eat and drink, and divide the spoil.

V. The fifth bar that with-holdeth persons from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of *restlessness*: *Ye will not come to me that you may have life.* And alace! This is an Iron bar indeed, by which all that are in hell have barred themselves out of Heaven. Alace! shall you be such wretches also? O what a dreadful sound is that, *Wo unto thee, O Jerusalem! Wilt thou not be made clean? When shal it once be? Ah! Turn you, turn you, why will you dye? Why will you*

*A Sermon concerning
you slight this great Salvation ? O will none
of you this day embrace it ?*

V I. The sixth bar that with-holdeth persons from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of *worldly-mindedness* : Many of you are so fixed to the world, that you cannot come and close with this great salvation. I may allude to that word spoken of *Saul*, *1 Sam. 10. 22.* *That he hid himself amongst the stuff* ; for many have buried and nestled themselves in the midst of the world, that they cannot embrace this great salvation.

VII. The seventh bar which keepeth many from embracing this great Salvation, is the bar of *hard-heartedness* : there hath such a stupidity and hardness of heart seised upon many, that let Christ preach as he will to them (by his Word, or by other dispensations) they are no more moved than if his Word and dispensations were a thousand miles from them. O that strong bar of hardness of heart, when shall the Omnipotent hand of God break it ?

VIII. The eighth bar that hindereth many from embracing this great Salvation, is the bar of *slothfulness* : Many of you cannot be at the pains to embrace it : but I say unto you, there are but small pains in the way of godliness : I say unto you, it may so easily be had, that it is at your offer to day ; and if you will, you may forth your hand and take it. Consider therefore what you will do. O will you despise it ? I say, will you still neglect and despise it ? Will you but read that dreadful word, *Acts 13. 40.*

Bethold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish. Tell me freely, Would you have us to return this answer to him who sent us, that you are despisers of the great Salvation? Say to it, are there none of you who (for all this) will consent to partake of this great Salvation? O captives and prisoners, and you who are in the bonds of Satan, will you come and partake of this great salvation, and you shall be made free? I have an act of release for you to day, if you will come and make use of it, you shall be set at liberty. But oh! shall the prison doors be cast open, and yet none come forth? But that I may come to a close, I say yet unto you, O poor Prisoners, go forth, go forth, and partake of this great salvation. Oh! will you not come forth? What holdeth you in? the foundation of your prison-house is shaken to day, therefore if you will but come forth, and cast a look to Christ, your very shackles shall fall off your hands, and you shall be as those who were never bound. Now I leave this with you, and to make you think upon it, I shall speak these five words to you, and I intreat you think upon them.

1. First, I have excellent tidings to tell you; (I hope some of you will give ear to them) viz. there is a great Person come here to day, and that is the Mighty Author of this great salvation, who hath brought everlasting righteousness with him, desiring you to make use thereof; it is his desire that you would take his excellent gifts at his hand. These I say are the tidings that I have

to preach unto you: and I hope never to be declared a lyar for what I preach unto you: I say yet unto you, that Christ the Author of the great Salvation, desireth to give it freely unto you, if you will but take it. But, O will you not take it? I think if you did see an hundred men lying in prison or dungeon without all light, bread or water, and a great Prince coming to them; saying, I desire you all to come forth, and partake of this great liberty, which I bring unto you; and every one of them should answer, I scorn to come forth at this time: would you not think them exceeding great fools? And yet I fear this act of great folly falls out in many of your hands to day; that when Christ hath given us the Keys of your prison doors, and they are opened, you will not come forth: But must intreat you yet to come forth and shew yourselves. For who knoweth but we may be commanded to shut your prison doors again, and seal them with seven seals, with an unalterable decree from Heaven, never to be recalled? Wherefore, O ye Prisoners, go forth, go forth, from your prison-house.

2. Secondly, I would say this to you, that is not without much ground that this Salvation (offered to you) is called a great Salvation. I know a little paper of two or three sheets might contain all the salutations that ever man obtained, but the World would not be able to contain all the books which might be written to the commendation of this great salvation: Yea, (unto pro-

who will embrace it.) I say, First, if thou find not this salvation above thy faith, then go thy way when thou art come: But I know thou wilt find it both above thy faith and hope. Secondly, if thou find it not above thy desires when thou art come unto it, then go thy way again; but were thy desires as the sand upon the Sea shore, thou shalt find always more in this Salvation than ever thou couldst desire. Thirdly, if this Salvation be not above what thou canst conceive, then go thy way when thou art come to it; but think of it as thou canst, it shall always be above thy thoughts of it. Fourthly, if this Salvation be not above thy opinion of it, then go thy way when thou art come unto it; but I know thou wilt find it far above thy opinion of it. Therefore seeing it is so great a salvation, as that all the World could not contain all the books that might be written in the commendation of it: O! will you embrace it, even to day, while it is in your offer?

3. Thirdly, I would say this unto you, Be perswaded that there is no sin that will more provoke the Majesty of God to punish you than the sin of slighting this great salvation. Bring forth these Murderers, saith the Lord, (of the slighters of this invitation) and slay them before me. I intreat you enquire at your own hearts, what you will answer when you are reproved for slighting of it. Old men, will you ask at your own hearts what you will answer to Christ when he shall propose that question to you, why slighted you

the great salvation? Old women, what will you answer when he shall say to you, why slighted you the great Salvation? Young men, and young women, inquire at your own hearts what you will answer, when Christ shall say to you, why slighted you the great Salvation? Can ye imagine any answer to that question? O dreadfull shall the Wrath of God be, that shall be executed upon the slighters of this great salvation!

4. Fourthly, I would say this unto you, that Heaven is waiting to hear what acceptation the offer of this great Salvation doth get among you. Here is the great Salvation, here is the offer of it, and here is the commendation of it; what say you to it? Is it not an excellent Salvation? Is it not a free Salvation? Is it not a great Salvation? Is it not an eternal Salvation? Why then do ye not welcome it? Can any of you say any thing to the discommendation of it? I know you cannot: Yea, I dare say, your own hearts are admiring it as most excellent; and therefore, O will ye accept it! Alace, shall there be none here who will be found accepters of this great Salvation, so freely offered this day.

5. Fifthly, I would say this to you, let all the Angels praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. All the Saints round about the Throne praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. All those who are expectants of Heaven, praise him who is the Author of

of this great Salvation. All ye to whom this offer is made, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. O Heaven, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. O all ye Fowls of the Air, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. O Fire, Hail, Snow, Vapors, Stormy Winds, and Tempests, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. All the Tribes of the earth, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. Our own Souls, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation: And all that is within us, bless him who is the Author of this great Salvation. O! who would not praise him, who is the Author of this great Salvation? Are there any here, that will refuse to commend him? O! Think upon him, and let not this be a day of slighting him. Now, where are your hearts at this time? I will tell you where many of your hearts are, they are thinking upon the World: But I am sure, there are not many of them thinking upon his great salvation. Now, what resolution mind ye to go away with to day? Oh! have ye a resolution beyond what ye had when ye came hitherto to day? Are there any here who have his resolution, *To whom shall we go, but unto him who is the Author of this great salvation, who alone hath the words of eternal life?* Even the Lord breath it upon you. Or is this your resolution, that through Christ's strength, forsake him who will, ye will never forsake him? O! have ye this resolution, *That ye will esteem more*

highly of the great salvation then ever ye did? O that the Lord would keep these in the imaginations of the thoughts of your hearts forever. But as for you who have no resolutions to embrace this great salvation: O! wherewith shall I commend it unto you? Do not your own necessities commend it? But if nothing can persuade you to come away and embrace it, then this place shall be a heap of witnesses against you; for it hath heard all the words of the Law which he hath spoken unto you. Josh. 24.

Oh! cast your eyes upon these pillars of the house and stones in the walls: I take them as so manie witnesses, that they may speak and testify against you in the great day of the Lord, if ye neglect this great salvation to day. Therefore, as ye go away, be thinking upon it, and whether or not ye mind to embrace it now while ye may have it. This day I set life and death before you: I have set before you both the great salvation, and the great damnation: And, O that ye had understanding in all these things, that ye being wise might be provoked at last to embrace this great salvation; the which we do yet again entreat you to think upon. Is not Heaven looking upon you at this time, to see what ye will do with this great offer of salvation, which I have this day from the Lord presented unto you? Now to him that can persuade you to embrace this great salvation, this blessed Mystery into which the Angels desire to pry: That him who can bring you back from the pit,

can enlighten you with the light of the living: To him who hath the keys of your prison, Who can open, and none can shut; and can shut, and none can open: To him, who hath all power in Heaven and in earth communicate. To him, who can deliver you from the power of the grave, and can set you free from all your enemies, we desire to give praise.

S E R M O N II.

Heb. 2. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?*

THERE are two great and most ordinary complaints in these days. First, there are many who complain, that their estates and persons are in bondage, and that they are sold for slaves to the hands of strangers: But, O that we could turn over the complaint to this, that our souls are in bondage, and that we are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, that we might be provoked to long for the great salvation that is in our offer! 2. There are many complaining, and not without much cause, that there is now such a toleration of errors; But, O wilt thou complain also of this, that within thine heart there is a toleration of lusts: is there not an act of toleration concluded in thy breast, that the devil & all his company may reign in thee at pleasure? Oh! have ye not need of great salva-

tion? Shal I tell you, that Christ is courting you to embrace it; and that he putteth on all his most glorious robes, and manifesteth himself unto you, as a suiter, making offer of himself, and of his great salvation? O! tell me, have ye seen him? Or do you think to see him this day? What robes hath he on? There are five glorious robes wherewith he cloaths himself, when he condescendeth to manifest himself to his people.

First, he cometh to his own with the garments of salvation, according to that word, Zach. 9. 9. *Rejoyce, O daughter of Sion, greatly: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; for behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation.* Ay, your King is come here to day, and will ye not fall in love with him, when he is cloathed with the garments of Salvation? Can ye ever have a more conquering sight of Christ, then when he is cloathed with such an excellent robe, and offering you salvation?

Secondly, he appeareth to his own sometimes in garments dyed in blood, according to that word, I^{sai}. 63. vers 1. 2 *Who is this that cometh up from Edom, with dyed garments in blood, as one that treadeth the wine-press alone?* And now I say to you, will not look to Christ when he appears in the garments of salvation, have ye a heart to refuse him who hath fought such a combat for you, who hath trod the Wine-press alone, and hath stained all his garments with the blood of thy enemies? Or, is there any here, who dare refuse his salvation, when they see how he treadeth his en-

mies in anger, and trampleth them in his fury, and thus, sprinkleth their blood upon his garments. O ! tremble at this sight, and seek quarter from him in time, or he shal dye his garments with the blood of thine immortal soul.

Thirdly, Christ appeareth unto his own, being cloathed with these humble robes of condescendency, when he came in the similitude of sinful flesh. O ! what a sight was that, to behold the Prince of heaven cloathed with our nature? What a sight was that, to behold him that was cloathed with light, as with a garment, to be cloathed with our infirmities; yet he condescended to cloath himself thus, that we might have access unto him, and be partakers of his gifts? O ! can we refuse him, when love hath thus pressed him to put on the beggers weed, that he might say to worms, ye are my brethren, and my sisters?

Fourthly, Christ sometimes manifesterth himself, being cloathed with the garments of beauty and ravishing majesty: such was the sight that the Spouse got of Christ, Song 2. 3. *As the Apple-tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved amongst the sons.* And Song 5. when she saw him ~~want~~ and ruddy, and the standard-bearer of ten thousand. And such was that joyful sight of him, when his garments was as the light, and white as the snow, which he had at the Transfiguration, when these glorified ones did come, as it were, Ambassadors from that higher House, to make him a visit.

And fifthly, Christ he sometimes appeareth

to his own in robes of dreadful majesty, and terrible highness and loftiness, when the soul upon the first sight of him remains dead, and there remaineth no more life in them: such was the sight Daniel got, in the tenth chapter: and such was the sight that John got of Christ, Rev. 1. 17. And I would ask of all that are here, What a sight have ye gotten of Christ to day? In which of all these robes have ye seen him? It is true, we are not to look to the extraordinary sights of him; but yet if ever thou hast seen him in any of his wooring robes, sure he hath appeared matchless; and how then shal ye then refuse him?

But now to come to the words I was speaking unto you of; The first thing in the words, to wit, that there are many who live under the offer of this great Salvation, that do slight it, and do not embrace it. And now I shall only adde a few things further unto you. 1. Let me propose a few considerations, to perswade you to embrace this great Salvation. God forbid we go away before we embrace this Gospel-salvation: and therefore I charge you in his Name, go not away before ye embrace it. And to presse it home upon you, there are these eight or nine properties of this great Salvation that is offered unto you to day.

And first, it is a free salvation; ye have more ado but to put forth you hand and take it. O! come and take it. Christ hath soughten for this Salvation, and there is no more required of you, but to come & reap the fruits of his victory.

Whoever will, let him come ; there is nothing that should move you to stay away. O captives, bond-slaves to satan ! O prisoners of hope ! will ye come and partake of the great Salvation ? What holds you from coming away, and partaking of it ? It is freely offered unto you. Ay, believe it : Christ requires no more of you, but that ye should come and take it out of his hand : If ye consent to obey, the bargain is ended ; ye shall eat the good of the land, *Isai. I.*

Secondly, this great salvation is a compleat salvation that is offered unto you to day : this is clear, *Luke I. 71.* That we might be saved from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us. There is not an enemy that is in the way ; but if thou wilt come and partake of the great salvation, thou mayest have victory over it ; so compleat a salvation is it that is in your offer this day. O ! shall we pass away, and not embrace it ? O ! shall our cursed hearts undervalue this compleat salvation, that is come to our door ? Believe it, salvation is near unto you, if ye will take it.

Thirdly, it is a wonderful salvation : it is such a salvation as the Angels desire do pry into it : and it is such a salvation, that all the Prophets desired to pry into it. It is almost six thousand years, since all the Angels of heaven fell into a sea of wonder at this great salvation. It is almost six thousand years since *Abel* fell into a sea of wonder at this great salvation. And what think you

is his exercise this day ? He is even wondering at this great salvation. Would ye ask at all the Angels in heaven, would they not all say, O ! embrace the great salvation ? Would ye ask all the Saints that are above, would they not advise you to embrace the great salvation ? Should ye ask at Adam, would he not say, O ! embrace this great salvation ? Could ye ask at Abel, would he not say, O ! embrace the great salvation ? And would not all the Patriarchs say unto you, O ! embrace the great salvation ? And do not all that have tasted of the sweetnes of it , cry out unto you , Come and embrace the great salvation ?

The fourth property of this salvation is , that it was bought at an exceeding dear rate : it is a dear salvation. Would you know the difference between Christ's coming to this salvation , and your coming to it ? It is this : Christ was forced to travel through all the armies of the Justice of God. He was forced to drink of the cup of the wrath of God , before he could come to purchase this great Salvation ; and now what is required of you to obtain this ? We may say no more, but put out our hands and take it. Will ye look to the price that was laid down for this Salvation ? There is not a wound in the body of Christ , but it saith, This is a dear salvation. There is not a reproach Christ met with , but it saith , O ! is not this a dear salvation ? There was not a necessity that he was put into , but it saith , Is not this great and dear salvation ? O Sirs ! will ye not come

come and take this great salvation, this dear salvation? What must I give for it, say ye? I say, ye must give nothing for it: come, and take it without money, and without price. It was dear to Christ, but it shal be cheap unto you. O! is it not cheap unto you? I assure you, if ye will come to the market to buy the great salvation, there is none of you that needeth to stand for the price of it. O! come and take it, and have it, and there shall be no more pricing.

Fifthly, it is an everlasting salvation, that ye shal enjoy the fruits of throughout eternity, as is clear, *Heb. 9. 13.* *He became the author of eternal redemption unto us.* It is a salvation that the devil can never be able to get out of your hand: if ye take it, ye shal never be robbed of it again. O come, and partake of this great salvation, whereby the gates of hell shal never prevail against you.

Sixthly, it is a noble and honorable salvation: it is not to be taken out of one slavery to another, but it is to be taken out of prison, that we may reign, *Luke 1. 71.* compared with verse 74. it is, *That we being saved, may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.* I say, come, come, and partake of this great salvation, that your glory may be increased, and that ye may be exalted above the Kings of the earth.

Seventhly, it is a most advantageous Salvation: What are the advantages of any Salvation, that are not to be found in this? Is there no peace to be found through this salvation? Is it

not liberty to be found through this Salvation? Is there not eternal enjoyment of God to be found through this Salvation? Yea, all Salvations are in this one Salvation.

Lastly, it is a Royal Salvation, for it cometh to us from and through the Son of God: Christ is the Author of it: and we conceive Christ may be said to be the Author of this Salvation, in these respects. 1. He is the meritorious cause that did procure it: It was the price of his blood that was laid down for to purchase this great Salvation. 2. He is the fountain from whence it floweth, according to that word which we have cited, *Heb. 5. 9.* *He became the Author of eternal salvation.* 3. He is the person that fitteth our spirits for the partaking of it: and it is he that removeth mountains out of the way, that we may have fair access unto the great Salvation. 4. It is he that must persuade our hearts to embrace, and to take hold of it. He standeth without, and cryeth to the heart to embrace this great Salvation: and he standeth within, making the heart to cry out: *Content, I will embrace the great salvation:* He is indeed the person that commendeth, and doth point forth this great Salvation unto us. He is that noble Minister of it. It began first to be preached by him.

Now is there any of you that have fallen in love with the great Salvation, that ye may trye your selves? I shall give you some evidences of the persons that are meet unto this great salvation.

1. Is thine estimation of the great salvation increased, be what it was in the morning when thou camest hither? Is thine estimation of the great gospel-salvation a foot higher then what it was in the morning? I say unto thee, thou art not far from the great salvation; come away. 2. Is thy desire after the great salvation increased, be what it was in the morning? Hast thou stronger desires after the great salvation, then before thou camest hither? That is an evidence thou art not far from it. 3. Is thy thoughts of the necessity of the great salvation greater then they were? Thinkest thou that thou hast more need of the great salvation, then ever thou thoughtest before? And is thine opinion and thoughts of saving thy self, less then they were before thou camest hither? Art thou forced to cry out, *Noe but Christ can save me?* I say, thou art not far from the great salvation: wilt thou come away! O that you would once seal this conclusion with much heart-perswasion, *I am undone without Christ, I am undone without Christ*, who is the Author of this great salvation. Are there any of you that are sensible that ye are in the fetters of sin, and in the bonds of iniquity? Are you brought to the conviction of this, that you are yee in the gall of bitterness? I say, if thou be brought in to this length, to be sensible of thy bonds, and are crying out, *O Redeemer! hasten, and come away!* I say, If thou be sensible of thy bonds and imprisonments, and crying out, *O thou that wast* anoin-

*A Sermon concerning
anointed from eternity to proclaim liberty to the ca-
ptives, and the opening of the prison to them that are
bound ! O hasten, and come away, and redeem
me, even poor me, sinking, sinning, perishing, self-
destroying me ? thou art not far from the great
salvation. 4. Art thou a person who beginneth
to weep, because thou hast been so long a stranger
to Christ, and the great salvation ? Old men that
are here, How long have you been strangers to
the great salvation, and to the Author of it ? Now
will you shed one tear for your estrangement; and
cry out ; *Wo is me, that Christ and I have been so
long aunder.* I say, if thou hast come that length,
thou art not far from the great salvation : Come
away. O pity yourselves: make haste, make haste,
and come away.*

But now in the third place, let me give you
some evidences, by which you may know more
clearly, whether or no you have embraced this
great salvation, that you may know yourselves,
and that you walk not down to your grave with a
lye in your right hand.

The first evidence of a person that hath em-
braced the great salvation, is, that he will have
an high esteem of the Savior and Author of the
great salvation. Hast thou a matchless esteem of
matchless Christ the Savior of the World ? This
is a speaking evidence unto thee, thou art a par-
taker of the great salvation. Art thou come to this
length, that thou criest out : *None but Christ
can be my Christ ;* it is a speaking evidence, that

thou art come to be a partaker of the great salvation, when thou canst cry out that word, Exod. 15. 3. *The Lord is my strength and my song, he alone is become my salvation.* If Christ hath become thy salvation, then it is like he hath become thy soul. I would ask this of you, Were you ever brought this length, that you durst not adventure to praise Christ alone, but was forced to call in all the creatures, and say: *O magnify the Lord with me?* O that is an evidence that you have embraced his salvation.

Secondly, those who have embraced the great salvation, will study to maintain and keep their grips of it; they will study to hold fast so precious a jewel: this is prest, Gal. 5. 1. *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free:* Yea, they will study to walk suitably to this noble mercy; at least, they will strive and endeavor to do it, as is also prest in that same verse. I say, if thou hast been made a partaker of the Gospel of Salvation, thou wilt strive to keep thy self from the power of those things that once triumphed over thee.

Thirdly, a person that is a partaker of the great salvation, he will have a high esteem of this mercy and salvation: So Paul, when he speaketh of it here, he cannot but put some note of excellency to it, calling it, *the great Salvation*; therefore, I say, if thou hast embraced the great salvation, thou wilt have so high esteem of it, that not to be so subjected to it as thou shouldest, or

to be in subjection to the power of thy lust in any measure, will be thy burden and affliction: The man will be sorry when he is brought forth from the House of his bondage unto the red Sea: He will be sorry, that when he should have songs of triumph over his idols put in his mouth, that they should sing songs of triumph over him.

Fourthly, a person that hath embraced the great Salvation, he will be longing sometimes for the day when this Salvation shall be compleat, when he shall sing that song with that numerous multitude which cannot be numbered, Revel.7.9. O what a day shall it be, when thou shalt begin to sing that song? After this, saith he, I beheld, and lo a great multitude of all people which no man could number, of all people, nations and languages, stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and they cryed: And how cryed they? They cryed with a loud voice. They would not mutter the song, nor sing silently; but cryed with a loud voice: And what did they cry? They cryed with a loud voice, salvation unto our God who sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb. I would only ask of you the partakers of the great Salvation, what songs shall be put into thy mouth, when the waters of Jordan shall divide themselves, that the ransomed of the Lord must pass thorow? When thou shalt sing that song, Psalm 115: 1. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee belongeth the glory of our salvation. O what a day shall that be, when that excellent

song shal be put into thy mouth ! Yea, what a day shal it be, when thou shal be cloathed with these excellent garments that are made mention of, *Isai. 6. 10.* so he hath cloathed thee with the garments of salvation ; and he hath covered thee with the robe of righteousness. O what robes are these ! Did you ever see such excellent robes as these must be ? I think , we will misken our selves. O do you not think , we will misken our selves, when we shal put on these excellent robes ! Now therefore is the bargain closed , or will ye go away before ye take this great salvation ? Dare ye go out at these doors , and neglect the great Salvation ? I would ask this of you , think ye it will not be most sad , that Christ should tell this in Heaven of you to night ; I was preached to a pack of stones ; that none of them would love me ? Will ye not be feared that this report shall be carried back to Heaven of you ? For what report can Christ carry back but this ? Now is the cord of this great salvation let down unto you : is there none of you that will take a grip of it ? Will ye fligter after it : Will ye make this a rejoicing day in Heaven, that is a fasting day unto you : and the way to make it so, is, to embrace the great salvation. Now what say ye to it , old men ? Let me speak to you , and ask your thoughts of the great salvation. Gray hairs should be a crown of glory , if it be found in the way of righteousness. Old men, speak your minds, that young men may not have your bad examples : What say ye of this salvation ? Is it not a most glorious salvation ?

Is it not a most excellent salvation that is in your offer? I intreat you, speak your minds: tell Christ ye are content to take the great salvation, otherwise, whoever he be that will not partake of this Gospel-Salvation, I in the Name and authority of Christ our Master, denounce eternal and irrevocable war against him: Put on your harness, ye shall not boast when ye put it off again: The wrath and fury of God shall come upon you to the uttermost, if ye embrace not this great salvation. Other wars are but for a time: the greatest Captains that ever the earth did carry, are now laid down in the sides of the pit, and their swords broken under their heads. Armies of ten hundred thousand, an hundred years time have laid them all in their graves, and ended all their contests; but there is no discharge of this war that shall be concluded betwixt Christ and you: It shall become an eternal and most terrible war, which shall be but beginning when time is ended. Now peace or war, which of them will ye choose? Dare ye send a charge to Christ, and say, Ye will desie him? I am afraid there will be two things that many of us will report to day. First, I am afraid there be many that will give Pharaohs report to the offer of the great salvation, and say: Who is the Lord that I should obey him? I tell you who he is, He is glorious in holiness, fearfull in praises, doing wonders. O embrace him before he go hence, and give not Pharaohs report, lest ye be drowned in the sea of his wrath, whence there shall be no recovery. Secondly,

I fear there will be many here to day, that will give Demas report to his precious offer: I will go and forsake Christ, and embrace this present World. O bad exchange! Cursed be he that shall make it: will ye be of Demas humor. I fear there hath been many of that humor of a long time: but, I intreat you, once be wise before you dye. I confess that Proverb, Old fools, are twice fools. I think, old men that will not embrace the great salvation, I think ye are triple fools. What wait ye for? Is there anything can afford you any satisfaction but this great salvation? Now are ye convinced, old men, that Christ is waiting for your answer. I intreat you, before ye go hence, speak your minds what ye think of the great Salvation. Is it not a lovely Salvation? Is it not lovely now? What say ye to it? I am to go away, and the offer is to be taken up at this time; and it is hard to say, if ever ye shal have an offer again. I would only say this to you, and be sure of it; though I should never be a partaker of this great salvation, yet I shal be a witness against you that are not partakers of it. I tell and declare unto you, I shal be a witness against you; if ye embrace not the great Salvation. Now, old men, are ye perswaded to embrace it? Let me obrest you by the beauty of Christ, come and partake of the great salvation, ye that are travalling upon the borders of eternity. Now, if ye will give no more, give this, will ye go home and think upon it? I shall not be uncharitable, nor enter to judge your thoughts. I fear there shal be many

A sermon concerning
 many declared and found guilty amongst us, that
 we have declared unto Heaven, we will not en-
 brace the great Salvation, but have trodden in
 blood of the Son of God under foot. Now I in-
 treat you, every one of you, ask of your selves
 ye be the persons that will presume in your heart
 to do so. Now I shal leave it with you, let it be a
 witness against you. I shal leave it with this;
 come away, old men, young men, old women and
 maids, come and embrace this precious Gos-
 pele of Salvation. Ye may say, ye bid us come, but
 we cannot come: I desire no more of you, but
 come with this, *Lord, I am content to come, but
 cannot come.* Come once to that; for if once
 ye be content to receive it, it will not be long befor
 ye be able to receive it. Now shal Christ de-
 part, and will none of you say, ye are content
 to take him? Will ye charge your own conscienc
 with this: am I content to take Christ and the
 great Salvation! O blest, blest, blest be he that
 the Author of this great Salvation, and blest
 he that gets any of the ends of the cord of the
 great Salvation, that we sink not under the wrath
 and fury of the Lord! Come and embrace the
 great Salvation: and again, I say, come, and em-
 brace it: for what can ye have, if ye want it? And
 what can you want, if you have it? I can
 say no more, but close with that word, *Isai. 63
 verse 21. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed to
 ends of the World, to those that are far off. What
 hath he proclaimed? Say ye to the daughter of
 Sion: Behold thy salvation cometh. behold it com-*

say to you that are the ends of the World, Salvation is brought near to you: Stout-hearted, and far from righteousness, the great Salvation is brought near unto you, and will ye send it away? Oh! consider what ye are doing. And to him that can persuade you to embrace the great Salvation, we desire to give praise.

A SERMON Concerning DEATH.

Psal. 86. 48. *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? &c.*

IT is very hard to determine where all that are here, shall be within thirty years: for even ere that time come, many (if not all) of us who are here, shall have taken up our eternal lodging. And whether we shall take it up in the eternity of joy, or the eternity of pain, is also hard to determine: Only this one thing I am sure of, that all of us shall shortly be gone: And as long as the shadows of death shall be fitting upon our eye-lids, and our eye strings shall begin to break. Therefore I would the more seriously enquire of you, What would you think if death were

were approaching this night unto you? Thin
you that Jesus Christ is gone up to prepare
place for you, even for you? Surely, I think we
are all near to eternity: and there are some bea-
ring me to day, whom I defy the World to affir-
m that ever they shal hear another Sermon: There-
fore I intreat you all to hear this preaching, as if
it were the last preaching that ever you should
hear: and, O that we could speak it, as if it
were the last Sermon that ever we would preach
unto you. Believe me, Death is another thing
then we take it to be: Oh, what will many of us
do in the day of our visitation, when desolation shall
come from afar? Where will we flee for rest? and
where will we leave our glory? Old rich men,
where will you flee when death assaults you?
Old poor men, where will you flee when
death assaults you? Old women, where will you
flee when death assaults you? Young men,
where will you flee when death assaults you?
Young women, where will you flee when death
assaults you? It was an ancient observation of
David, Psalm 39, 5. That God had made
days as an hand-breadth; which either may relate
to the four-fold estate of man, viz. his infancy,
his child-hood, his man-hood, and his old age;
Or it may relate to the four-fold time of his life,
viz. his morning, his fore-noon, his after-noon,
and his evening; yet all our lifetime is but a day.
And, O think you not that our day is near unto
close?

Now before that I begin to speak to any thing

from the words, I shall speak a few things to these two questions, which I conceive may not altogether be unprofitable.

Quest. I. Whether it be lawful for any to desire to dye, and to return unto their long and endless home? Whether it be lawful for one to cry out, O time, time, flee away, and all my shadows let them be gone, that so long eternity may come.

Ans^w. I say, it is lawful in some cases for one to desire to dye: For it was Pauls desire, Phil. I. 3. I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better. And 2 Cor. 2. 2. We groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed with our house which is from Heaven. long greatly till the twentieth one year of my age come, when my minority shal be overpast, that I may be entred Heir of that matchless inheritance. But to clear in what cases it is lawful to desire to dye.

I. I say it is lawful to desire to dye, when itoweth from a desire of uninterrupted fellowship and communion with Christ, and conjunction with him; this is clear, 2 Cor 5. 6. Knowing that whilst we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord; therefore verse 8. We are willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. As also it is clear Phil. I.

2. I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. It was his great end to have near and unmixt communion with Christ: What aileth you

you Paul? might one have said, may you not content to stay a while here: Nay, saith Paul, desire to be gone, and to be with Christ. Was thou never with him here, Paul? I have been with him, saith he; but what is all my being with him here, in comparison of my being with him above, While I am present in the body, I am but absent from the Lord. Therefore I will never be at rest, saith he, get what I will, untill I get Christ, untill I get those naked and immediate embracements of that noble plant of renown the flower of the stalk of Jesse, who is the light of the higher house, the eternal admiration of Angels.

2. It is lawful to desire to die when it flows from the excellencies of Heaven, and from a desire to partake of those excellent things that are there; this is clear, 2 Cor. 5. 4. We groan being burdened, or as the word is, We groan, as they are pressed under a heavy burden, that we may be loathed upon, &c. What aileth you to groan so? Paul? O! saith he, I groan that mortality may swallowed up of life.

3. It is lawful to desire to dye when it flows from a desire to be freed from the body of Death and from those temptations that assault us, from those oppressions wherunto we are subject by it. Doubtless Paul desired to dye this account, when he cryed out, Rom. 7. 24. wretched man that I am, Who shall deliver from this body of death! He longed greatly for a day, wherein he should be made white like

ings of a Dove, covered with silver, whose feathers are of a yellow gold. O ! Christ, saith Paul, I am as one impatient till I be above, where I shall be cloathed with those excellent and cleanly robes, the righteousness of Christ. Oh ! saith Paul, I think every day a year, till I shal be possessed of that Kingdom where satan cannot tempt, and the creatures cannot yield, and where I shal be free from all my fears of sinning. Now in all these respects who would not desire to dye ? But to guard these, I would give you these four Cautions.

1. **Caution**, Your desires to dye should not be peremptory, but ye should desire to die with submission to the will of God ; so that although he would fill up fifteen years more to your life, you should be content to live it out.

2. **Caution**, When your desires are hasty, and off hand, suspect them ; for some when they meet with any outward cross (without all deliberation) will cry out, O to be gone, O if I were dead ! But your desires to dye should be deliberate, but not hasty or rash.

3. **Caution**, It is not lawful to desire to dye because of personal affliction. Many when they meet with bitter afflictions, will cry out, O to be gone ! They long for death, even upon that account : such were Jobs desires, Job 20.21.22. and chap. 6. vers. 7.8. O that I might have my request, even that would please God to destroy me, &c. This desire was very unlawful.

4. **Caution**, It is not lawful to desire to dye, I when

when thy predominant idol is taken away from thee, yet such was Jonahs desire, chap. 4. 23. Jonah thought his credit and reputation (which was his idol) was gone, and could never be regained; therefore he wished to dye. But I would lay this to you, that some will have ten desires for death when they have not one desire for Heaven. And what moveth Christians to be desirous to dye? It is not so much because of their hope, as because of their anxiety; it is not so much because of their confidence, as because of their impatience. But say unto you, when your desires of death are not accompanied with desires of Heaven, suspect them. I would say this, that there are some who will have ten desires for death, when they will not have one for the death of the body of death: But it were good for thee who art such, to be desiring the death of the body of death, then shouldest thou be in a more suitable frame to desire to dye.

3. Some will have hearty desires to dye; and yet when death cometh they will be as unwilling to dye as any: It hath been observed, that some who have much desired to dye, when death came, have cryed out, *O spare a little that I may recover strength, &c.* There is a great difference between a desire to dye, and death it self. It is an easie thing to desire to dye, but it is a very great busyness to meet with death, and to look it in the face when it cometh. We think death ere it comes near to us, to be but childrens play, but when we meet with it, it maketh us change our thoughts: for it is a great busyness to dye.

Quest. 2. Is it lawful for a Christian to desire to live when he is summoned to dye?

Ans^w. In some cases is it lawful for a Christian to desire to live, even when he is summoned to dye; which is clear from the practise of David, *Psal. 39. 13.* where he prayeth that the Lord will spare him a little: it is also clear from the practise of good Hezekiah, *Isai. 38. 3.* when he was commanded to set his house in order: for he should dye, and not live; he cryed forth, *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thy sight;* and Hezekiah wept sore. Or as the word is in the Original, he wept with great weeping: but to guard this, take these two Cautions.

Caution 1. Thy desires to live (when thou art summoned to dye) should not be peremptory, but with submission to the will of God, that if it be his pleasure to remove thee presently out of time, thou shouldst be content to dye.

Caution 2. Thy desires to live should have gracious principles, and also a very gracious end, as is most clear from David, *Psalm 39. 13.* where he saith, *O spare me a little that I may recover my strength, before I go from hence, and be no more:* his desire to live, was that he might have victory over his Idols; as if he had said, my desire to live, is, that I may have strength to wrestle with, and overcome my idols: and without all controversy, Hezekiah's desire was a most precious and well-grounded desire: However, I would say this unto thee, that thou shouldst

examine thy desires to live, as much (if not more) as thy desires to dye; for we are ready to shun death, if we could; but he is that universal King, unto whom all of us must be subject ere long.

Now in the words that are read unto you, there are these six things which may be clearly observed from them.

First, that it is a most true and infallible truth, that all persons shal once see death; as is clear in these words: *Who is he that liveth, and shal not see death?*

Secondly, that this truth, that we shal once see death, is not much believed, or thought upon by many; therefore it is that the Psalmist doubleth the assertion: *Who is he that liveth, and shal not see death? shal he deliver his soul (that is, his life) from the hand (that is) from the power of the Grave?*

Thirdly, that sometimes a Christian may win to the solid Faith of this truth, that once he must dye; this the Psalmist wan unto, as it is also clear in that word (who) *Who is he that liveth, and shal not see death?*

Fourthly, that the certainty of this, that once we shal dye, should be kept in our mind; therefore that note of attention, *Selah*, is put to it, as if he had said, *Take heed that there is none living that shal not dye.*

Fifthly, that howbeit some persons put the evil day far away, as if they were not to see death; yet is the day coming when they shall see death, and

and death shal take them by the hand.

Sixtly, we shal take notice of this from the context, that the Christian who is much in minding the brevity of his life, will believe the certainty of his death. The Psalmist was speaking of the shortness of his life in the preceeding verse, and in this verse he speakeith of the certainty of death.

Now as for the first of these things observed, viz. That it is certain and most sure, that we must all once dye: I hope there are none of you here who will deny it, although I confess some few of you believe it: yet said the woman of Tekoah, 2 Sam. 14. *We must all dye, and be like water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again; and God doth not accept the person of any.* And Job 30. 13. *I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* And it is very clear, Eccles. 8. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath he any power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war, neither shal wickedness deliver those that are given to it.* It is also clear, Heb. 9. 27. *It is appointed unto all men once to die.* So it is most clear that we must dye. I remember of one Philip King of Macedonia, who had one substitute for this very end, to cry at his chamber-door every morning, *Memento mori, memento mori, memento mori:* Remember thou art to dye. And it is reported to have been the practise of the Nestles of Greece, that in the day wherein their Emperor was crowned, that they presented a marble stone

unto him, and he was enquired after what fashion he would have his Tomb-stone made? Which practise speak this unto us, that although these were most destitute of the light of the Scriptures they were very mindful of death. Believe me death may surprise us before we be aware: for it is most certain that we must dye; but there is nothing more uncertain then the way how, and the time when we shal dye.

Death will surprise some, as it did *Abel*, in the open field, *Gen. 4. 8.* Death will surprise some, as it did *Eglon*, in his parlour, *Judges 3. 21.* And death will surprise some, as it did *Saul* and *Jonathan*, in the flight, *1 Sam. 31.*

Now in speaking unto this point, I shal first speak a little to those advantages which attend those that live within continual sight of death. Secondly, I shal give you some considerations to press you to prepare for death. Thirdly, I shal give you some directions to help you to prepare for death. And then we shal proceed unto the second point of doctrine which we observed from the Text, and shal speak a few things from it unto you, and so come to a close for this time.

First then, we conceive there are these seven advantages which attend those who live within the continual sight of this truth, that they must dye.

First, the faith of approaching death, will make a soul exceeding diligent in duty: This was our blessed Lords Divinity, *John 9. 4.* I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work: That is, death is approa-

approaching, therefore I must work. It is clear also, 2 Pet. 1. 12. compared with verse 14. In the 12. verse, Peter is exceeding diligent in his duty, and the ground of his diligence is in the 14. verse: *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, &c.* Yea, it is even the Epicures argument, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shal dye.* And should not the Christian much more cry out, *Let me watch, and pray, for to morrow I may dye.* I say, if the Epicures did make use of that notion to make them vigorous in the pursuit of their pleasures, O how much more should a Christian improve it, for making him vigorous in the pursuit of his duty? Therefore, I say unto you all, O! be diligent, for your night is drawing near. O Christians, and expectants of heaven, are you not afraid lest you be nighted before you have walked the half of your journey? For if you be nighted on your journey to Heaven, before you come to the end of your race, there is no retiring place whereunto you may turn aside to lodge; therefore, O work, work, work, while it is day; for behold death is approaching, and then shal we all be called to an account.

2. The faith of approaching death will make a Christian exceeding active in his duty: he will not only be diligent, but also exceeding serious and zealous in the exercise of his duty: This is clear from that notable exhortation, Eccles 9. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might:* and the reason is, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave.

whither thou goest. Wherefore, O be active while you are alive ; for you shall never work any more after you are dead : and if ye leave but one work undone, there is no doing of it after death : Then Lo & see no work, saith Solomon, in the grave, therefore O be active.

3. The faith of this truth, that we must all dye, will help a Christian to be exceeding mortified to the things of a present World. Oh, covetous men and women ! would you shake hands with cold Death but once every morning , I should desire you to pursue the World so much as you do. Paul was much in the meditation of his change , which made him, 2 Cor. 4.18. to overlook those things that are temporary : *While we look not*, saith he, *to the things that are seen*, which are temporal ; *but to the things which are not seen*, which are eternal. Therefore chap. 5. 1. Knowing that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved , we have a building of God , an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens ; therefore in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our house which is from Heaven. What aileth you , Paul, might one have laid , may you not take a look of the World ? No, saith he, for I know that if this earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved , I have a house with God , not made with hands , but eternal in the Heavens. That is , I know that ere long the pins of my Tabernacle will be loosed, and it will fall down about my ears , therefore I must look for another dwelling house. And 1 Cor. 7. 24. The fashion of this world passeth away ; therefore

more, saith he, verse 32. I would have you without
carefulness, caring to please the Lord. And Phil.
4. 2. Let your moderation be known to all men; the
Lord is at hand. As if he had said, death is ap-
proaching, and at hand; therefore, I intreat you,
be sober. But I think many of us will be found,
like Saul hid amongst the stuff; that is, we will
be lying amongst the midst of the pleasures of this
passing World. But I say to thee who art such
an one, that death will break the strings of thy
harp, and thy musick will quickly cease. O! but
death will make thee have a low esteem of the
World. O! blessed is the person who hath those
thoughts of the World all along his way, which
he shal have of it at his death! Have not the most
curled wretches been forced to cry out: Oh! I
would give ten thousand worlds for Christ? Have
not some persons (who have had the Moon upon
their head, and that have made their belly their
God) being forced to cry forth at death: O cursed
person that I am, that ever I made the world my
God! Alace, that I contented my self with the
World! Therefore, I say unto thee who art such
an one, O! stay thy pursuit after the World, for
death is approaching, that will cause all thy world-
ly comforts to evanish.

4. When a Christian believeth this truth,
that he must dye, it will be an exceeding great
restraint to keep him from sinning, as is clear,
Job 31.13. compared with verse 14. where Job
reckoning over many good deeds done by him-

self, saith: *What then shal I do, when God riseth up? And when he visiteth, what shal I answer him?* As if he had said, Sirs, mistake me not, I am not boasting much of my self, for I could not have it, done otherwise; else what should I do when God riseth up: How could I answer to God, if I had done otherwise? I think it were a notable practice for each of you, when temptations begin to assault you, to say: *O temptation! what shal I answer to God when he riseth up to reprove me, if I should yeeld unto thee.* Likewise Eccles, 11.9. where Solomon dissuading young men to pursue after vanity, bringeth this as a reason: *Know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgement?* Therefore, I say unto thee who art often tempted to sin, let death and reckoning with God be still in thy sight, and I defy thee then to embrace half so many temptations as now thou dost. I intreat you, to answer all your temptations with that one word: *What shal I do, when he riseth up? And what shal I answer, when he visiteth me?*

5. When a Christian liveth within the sight of this truth, that he shal once see death, it shal make him exceeding patient under every cross wherewith he meets: Such a Christian will hardly meet with a cross, but he will quiet himself with this; *Death will put me beyond this cross.* This is but a cloud that will quickly pass away. And for this cause did David so composedly put up that desire, Psalm 39. 4. *Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days.* He was sure that the knowledge of his end would

would put him in a sober and patient frame.

The sixth advantage is this, The faith of approaching death, will teach the person that hath it, to study saving wisdom; this is clear Psalm 90. 12. where David putteth up this request: *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* As it he had said, I will never think my self wise, till I know that blessed piece of Arithmetick, *How to number my days.* I would desire every one of you all, to think with yourselves every morning when you arise. Now we are an hour nearer unto eternity then we were before: and at the end of every hour, Now we are a day nearer unto eternity, then we were before. I say, think often, yea always thus, We were never so near death as we are now; for oh! are we not all nearer to eternity to day, then we were yesterday?

The seventh advantage attending the faith of approaching death, is this, That it will make a Christian very careful in preparing for death: it is impossible for one to believe really that death is approaching, and not prepare for it. Say what you will, if you be not careful in preparing for death, you have not the solide faith of this truth, that you shal dye: Believe me, it is not every one that thinketh he believeth this truth, that believeth it indeed. And, O how dreadful is it for an unprepared man to meet with death? He desireth not to dye; yea, he would give a World for his life; but dye he must, whether he will

or not ; for death will not be requested to spare you little when he cometh : and therefore , I say unto you: Set your house in order , for you shal surely dye. Old men and women , Set your house in order , for surely ye must dye. Young men and women , Set your house in order , for to morrow ye may dye , and be cut off in the flower of your age. Think not that there are any who can sell time : for I say , you shal never get time sold unto you. Alace ! I fear the most part of persons that dye now , death findeth them at unawares : for indeed the persons that dye amongst us , when we come to visite them , we may give you a full account of them , for we think they are all comprehended under these four sorts.

First , when we go to visite some persons on their death-bed , they are like unto Nabal , their heart is dying and sinking , like unto a stone within them : they are no more affected with death , then if it were a fancy. Alace , for the great stupidity that hath overtaken many ! Therefore , I intreat you , delay not your repentance till death , lest the Lord take away your wit , so that you cannot then repent , for your sensessnes and stupide frame of spirit.

A second sort we find in a presumptuous frame ; saying , They have had a good hope all their days , and they will not quite it now : they will go down to the grave with their hope in their right hand , or rather they will go down to the grave with a lyce in their right hand : they live in a presumptuous

tuous frame, and they dye in the same delusion: for when we tell them that by all probability they are going down to hell: they answer, God forbid! I was all my time a very honest man, or woman. But I love not that confession; for there are many such honest men and women in hell this day.

The third sort we find have some convictions, that they have been playing the fool all their days; but we can get them no further: I shal only say to such, To go down to the Grave with convictions in their breast, not making use of Christ, is to go down to hell with a candle in their hand, to let them see the way: and truly the greater part that dye, dye in this manner.

Fourthly, there are some whom we find in a self-righteous frame, trusting upon the covenant of works, and their own merits, and trusting by these to go to heaven; yet neglecting the offer of Christ's righteousness: But, alace! we find not one of a thousand in this frame, *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, that is best of all.* And scarcely do we find any in such a frame, *O wretched man that I am! who shal deliver me from the body of this death?* Therefore I say unto you who are all here, *O will you mind death before it take hold on you!* Oh, mind your work now! for you will find that death shal be work enough for it self, though you leave no work till then.

The eighth advantage that attendeth the Christian believing this truth, that once he must dye, is this; Death will not be so terrible to him; as it

is to many when it cometh. What think you, maketh death a King of terrors ? What maketh many to shake like the leaf of a tree, when they are summoned to appear before Gods Tribunal ? It is even because of this, they have not been thinking on death before it came, so as to prepare for it : and I fear many in this place may be scared for death ; and that when it cometh to them, they will say unto death, as *Achab* laid to *Elijah*, *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy !* Surely, death will take you, and bring you to the Judgement-seat of Christ : therefore study by all means to think often upon it, and make ready for it ; for, believe me, death is a very big word ; for it will once make you stand with horror in your souls, if your peace be not made up with God. I know not a more dreadful dispensation, then death and a guilty conscience meeting together.

The second thing that I shal speak unto from the first observation, viz. That it is a most certain and infallible truth, that all persons shal once see death, shal be to give some good considerations for pressing you to prepare for death.

The first consideration is this, that to dye well, and in the Lord, is a most difficult work; therefore I intreat you, prepare for death. It is a difficult work to communicate aright : it is a difficult work to pray aright ; and it is a difficult work to confer aright. But I must tell you, it is a more difficult work to dye aright, then any of these : it is true, it is more difficult to communicate aright, then to

pray

pray aright ; yet it is much more difficult to dye aright, then to communicate aright ; for it is a most difficult work to dye in the Lord. Death will put the most accurate Christian that is here to a wonderful search ; and therefore I will tell you nine things that death will try in thee. 1. Death will try both the reality and strength of thy faith ; it may be easy for thee to keep up faith under many difficulties, but death shal put thy faith to the greatest stress that ever it did meet with. Yea, know this, that the faith of the strongest believer may get, and ordinarily doth get, a set at death, the like whereof it never got before ; therefore prepare for death. 2. Death will try thy love to God ; some persons pretend much love to him, but death will propose this question to such a person, Lovest thou him more then these ? Lovest thou him more then thy wife ? More then thy house ? More then thy friends ? But your unwillingness to dye, giveth us much ground to fear that many have little love to Christ, but much to the World, and so dare not answer the question, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. 3. Death will try thy enjoyments ; some of you may be ready to think that you meet with many enjoyments, so that you might reckon, as you think, to fourty enjoyments, and sweet out-lettings ; but beware that death bring them not down to twenty. I have known some who thought they had met fourty times with God ; but when death came, it made them take down the count to the half ; therefore seeing death will try the reality

reality of thine enjoyments, O prepare for it, the
4. Death will try thy patience : thou mayest seem the
to have much patience now, but when death cometh (thou art put to dye) it will put thy patience so
to a great tryal; therefore prepare for it. 5. Death
will try the reality of thy duties, yea, even those
duties wherein thou hadst most satisfaction, as
thy communicating aright in such a place, thou
hopest that is sure; thy reading the Scripture at
such a time aright, thou hopest that is sure; thou
prayedst at such a time aright, and hopest that is
sure, thou meditatedst in such a place aright,
and thou hopest that is sure. But, believe me,
death may make thee change thy thoughts: for
there are some persons who have communicated
and prayed, &c. as right as any in this genera-
tion, who, for all that, will not find six duties
wherein they can find satisfaction at death.
6. Death will exceedingly try thy sincerity when
it cometh: An hypocrite may go all along his
whole way undiscovered, yet death may bring
him to light, and make it appear what a man he is.
7. Death will discover unto thee hid and secret
sins, of which thou never had a thought before;
yea, albeit thou thoughtest these had been forgot-
ten, death will let thee see them standing between
thee and the light of his countenance. 8. Death
will accurately try thy mortification: Some think
they have come a great length in mortification;
but, believe me, death will try it, and put it to
the touch-stone. 9. Death will try thy hope whe-

ther it be real or not. I shal only say this, that all the other graces must low their sails to faith, and so it is, faith must carry us thorow, being that last triumphing grace which must fit the field for us, when all the other graces will faint and ly by. It is faith that must enter us fairly within the borders of eternity. It is faith must gainstand all the temptations of death; yea, all the other graces, as it were, stand by, and see faith strike the last stroke in this war.

The second consideration to press you to mind death, is this: That ye are to dye but once. O! labor to do that well which you are to do but once, and the wrong doing of which can never be helped: If ye pray not aright, ye may get that mended; and if ye communicate not aright, ye may get that also mended: but, alace! if ye dye not aright, there is no mending of that: Therefore, O prepare for death, that ye may dye well, seeing ye are to dye but once.

The third consideration to press you to mind death, is this: That ye are pronounced blessed who dye in the Lord, Rev. 14.13. *Blessed are the dead which dye in the Lord.* O let that provoke you to prepare for death, that so ye may dye in the Lord, that is the only way to make you eternally happy. I confess, it is a question difficult to determine, whether it be more difficult to dye well, or to live well? I shal not answer it, but rather desire you to study both.

The fourth consideration to press you to prepare for death, is this; viz. That though thou

put

put all thy work by thy hand before death, yea
 shalt thou find that death shal have work enough
 for it self, yea as much as thou shalt get done. It
 will then be much for thee to win to patience, it
 will be much for thee to win to the sight of thy
 justification, and it will then be much for thee to
 win to assurance: O then, is it not needful for
 thee to put all thy work by thy hand before thy
 latter end come? Wherefore I may say to you, as
 Moses said in his Song, Deuter. 32. 29. O that they
 were wise, that they understood this, that they would
 consider their latter end! O that ye had this piece
 of divine wisdom! I pray you, consider that sad
 word, Lam. 1. 19. She remembered not her last
 end: and what of it? Therefore she came down
 wonderfully. So will the down-coming of many
 in this generation be wonderful, who consider not
 their last end.

The fifth consideration for pressing you to pre-
 pare for death, is this, viz. That their labor shal
 end, but their works shal not be forgotten, as is
 clear from that fore-cited place, Rev. 14.13. They
 rest from their labors, and their works follow them;
 and is not that a glorious advantage?

The sixth consideration to press you to prepare
 for death, is this, viz. That death may come up-
 on you ere ye be aware: ye know not but death
 may surprise you this night, before ye go home to
 your houses: and therefore let that press you to
 study a constant preparation for death.

The seventh consideration to press you to pre-
 pare for death, is this, viz. That as death leaveth
 you

you, so will Judgement find you: If death shal leave you strangers to Christ, ye shal appear before his Judgement-seat strangers unto him, therefore, I intreat you all, to prepare for it. I think that noble practise of *Paul*, exceeding worthy of imitation, *1 Cor. 15.31.* *I dye daily*, which I think doth comprehend these three things. 1. That *Paul* had death always in his sight. 2. It comprehendeth this, that he labored to keep such a frame as that every moment he should be ready to dye, so that whensoever death should put the summons in his hand, he should be content to answer. 3. It comprehendeth this, that he labored to lay aside and remove all things out of the way, that might detain him from laying down his tabernacle. O saith *Paul*, I labor so to clear my self of all hinderances, as that when ever I shal be summoned to remove out of time, I may willingly lay down my life. Therefore I would ask you this question, *viz.* When did you make your last testament? I think it were suitable for us to be renewing our latter-will every day, for in so doing, *Paul* made an excellent testament, the better of which none that died since have made, *2 Tim. 4.7.8.* *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;* these are very sweet articles: and then he addeth, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, that the Lord the righteous Judge shal give me at that day. And think ye not that very sweet that he would leave something unto you in Christ's Name? *viz.* *And not for me only, but for all them that*

wait for his appearance. Now I come to the thing proposed, viz. To give some directions for helping you to prepare for death.

Direct. 1. I intreat you, be much in preparation for death every day: for it is even a preparation for heaven, to be taking a sight of your grave and latter end every day.

Direct. 2. I intreat you, be much in these duties. First, in self-examination, that your compunction may be clear with God; for many a ragged compunction shall we have when death and we shall meet. Secondly, be much in the exercise of repentance, that so ye may have every fault and corruption in you mourned for, before death and you meet. Thirdly, be much in the exercise of faith, *making your calling and election sure*. Fourthly, be much in the exercise of mortification, and that will help you to keep a loose grip, not only of the World, but also of your other idols: and if ye be much in these, ye shall undoubtedly be prepared for death.

Direct. 3. Be much in minding the excellent things of heaven: a Christian that would be prepared for death, should have all his thoughts and conversation there. I think it would be an excellent help, in preparation for death, to take a sight of the crown every day.

Direct. 4. Labor always to keep a good conscience, void of offence toward God and man. I say, labor to keep thy conscience clear, and that shall be a continual feast unto thee.

Direct. 5. Slight not any known duty, do not crucify

crucify any conviction, neither break any resolution: put these three together, and that will exceedingly help you to prepare for death: I say, see that ye adventure not to slight any known duty: see that ye adventure not to crucify any conviction: and see that ye adventure not to break your resolutions.

Now we come to the second thing which we observed from the words, *viz.* That this truth, that we shal once see death, is not much believed by many of us: and to make this appear, we shal only give some evidences unto you, to prove that we are not as yet prepared for death.

1. *Evidence.* Doth not the unspeakable stupidity that hath overtaken many, say, that we are not people prepared for death? Alace! many of us would find our selves in a most stupid temper, if we were presently to dye: for many of us are no more moved with the threatnings and terrors of God, then if they did not belong unto us: and this saith, *We are not as yet prepared for death.*

2. *Evid.* That we are not prepared for death, in our pursuing so much after the vain and passing delights of a present World. Many of us rise up early, and go to bed late at night, and eat the bread of sorrow all the day, and load themselves with thick clay. And I am sure, that such a person (being night and day taken up with the World) is not prepared for death. I remember a word recorded of such a wretched one who was excee-

exceeding rich ; said he , I would give so many thousands of money , if death would but give me one day ; yet he got it not. And , O how suddenly will death surprise many of you , as it did him.

3. Evid. Which speaketh forth our unpreparedness for death , is our impatience under every petty cross that we meet with : for the prepared Christian will be patient under very sharp crosses.

4. Evid. That we are not prepared , is our not endeavouring to live within sight of our interest in God : Oh , if we were prepared for death , durst we live in so much uncertainty of our interest in God , and of our assurance of heaven !

5. Evid. Some of us can let our idols lye in our breast six years without repentance , and will never study to mortify them , nor repent for them ; and surely such are not prepared for death.

Now I intreat you seriously , to mind what hath been said , and that ye may the more seriously think upon it , I will tell you some material challenges , that your conscience at death will present unto you ; therefore take heed that ye may know how ye will answer.

1. Challenge , Is the slighting of much precious time , and tinning away the precious offers of grace. O what will ye answer to that challenge when death shal present it to you ! Death will say (or rather thine own conscience at death) what ailed thee to sin so many hours , without either praying , reading , or meditating ? Now have

have ye any thing to answer when death shall present this challenge to you? I intreat you, pre-meditate what ye will say: I intreat you, prevent death by presenting it first seriously to your selves.

2. *Challenge.* That death will present unto you, will be for the killing of many precious convictions which ye have had. What will each of you answer at death, when your conscience proposeth this challenge unto you? Thou mettest with such a challenge at such a time, and went home and crucified it. And at another time thou mettest with another challenge, and went home and crucified it. These challenges will be laid home to thy door, therefore think on them.

3. *Challenge.* Death will charge you for a formal hypocritical way of going about duties: I say your conscience will then tell you, that ye went to such a communion with a selfish end; and another time, ye prayed hypocritically and formally: And what will ye have to answer when ye meet with these challenges? I confess, I know not what ye can answer to these. But I charge you, be thinking what ye will answer: for it may be that these convictions shall ly on your consciences, that even this day you have heard two searching Sermons, and did meet with some convictions, but made no good use of them; yea, and it may be ye did sleep all that time. O! what will ye answer, when it will be said to you, ye went to such a Sermon, and slept all the time: and ye went to such a Communion, but had

had no other end before your eyes, but to be seen of men? I intreat you, consider presently what you will answer to these.

4. **Challenge.** Will be for your breaking many precious resolutions. It will be said to some of you, that at the Communion in this place, you took on vows, and did break them: I am sure you cannot question the Justice of this challenge, therefore see what ye will answer.

5. **Challenge.** Ye slighted many precious offers of the Gospel. O men and women in this City, what will ye answer to this? I was often exhorted to take Christ, and yet would never take him. What will conscience say to that, when death shall table it before you? I tell you what you must then answer: O cursed I, that ever refused Christ in the Gospel! And ye shall then be confounded, because this is your sin. Believe me, there was never an offer of this everlasting Gospel, and of Christ in it, made unto you, that shall not at death (before or after it) be brought to your remembrance. And, O how sad and doleful will it be to you, when Christ shall open the Book where your sins are written, and begin with the sin of slighting the great Salvation. Thus I invited you, when you were twelve years old, but ye would not come. I invited you when you were thirty years old, but ye would not come. I invited you when you were sixty years old, and ye would not come. What will ye answer to this? Have ye anything to say? Or must ye not stand speechless before your Judge, when

shall put home this challenge unto you : therefore think seriously upon it , how ye will answer to it.

6. **Challenge.** Will be for your sinning often-times against light : And, O how painful and sad challenge will that be at the day of death , when will be said , Thou sinned with a witness in thy bosom , that thou wast doing wrong. Thy conscience will say , *Ostentimes I did tell thee this is sinful, yet wouldest thou not abstain from it: And what will ye answer to this?*

7. **Challenge.** Ostentimes ye sinned upon very small temptations , and what will ye answer to that ? Must ye not then confess it , and say , Oh, how often have I deserted Christ , and embraced my idols upon a small temptation ! Now , I intreat you , be thinking what ye will answer to these even most material challenges , which certainly shall be presented to you at death. I assure you , ye must either answer all your challenges in Christ , or ye will not get them well answered : Therefore , I would exhort you , to embrace the Gospel , and Christ in it ; that so let death propose never so many challenges unto you , ye may answer them all , as David did , *viz.* God hath made with me an everlasting covenant : And that will answer all your challenges : Though my house be not so with God , yet I have the everlasting covenant to build my salvation upon.

Now to press you to make use of Christ , I shall give you these four considerations,

Consideration 1. If ye embrace not Christ now, death will be very unpleasant to you. what else can comfort thee, when going through the region of death, but this, *I am Christ's, I am Christ's?* Is there any other thing can comfort thee in that day, but only this, *I am Christ's, and am mine?*

Consideration 2. If ye embrace not Christ and the great Salvation now, it will be an hundred times easier if ever ye get time or liberty to do it, when ye are going to dye. For although many delay their closing with Christ till death, yet scarcely one in a hundred getteth favor to grip Christ at death. Therefore think on it; for you will not get your mind so composed at death, as ye imagine, nor things done, as ye suppose: therefore now embrace the great Salvation.

Consideration 3. If ye delay your closing with Christ till death seize upon you, ye shall never be able to make up that loss. For will the dead rise and praise God? Or shall any one come from the Land of forgetfulness, to take hold upon a crucified Savior? Therefore, O will ye take him for your Salvation.

Consideration 4. If ye will take Christ now, he shall be your guide when ye are going thorough the valley and shadow of death. And, O how blessed is the person that can sing that word, Psalm 48.14. *This is my God, he will be my guide even unto death.* If ye can sing that pleasant song, O how may ye be comforted when your eye-strings shall begin to break.

weak ! O how happy is he who can say, Though I walk thorow the shadow of death , yet will I fear no ill ; for I know that the Lord is with me ! Now this is the acceptable day , and the year of Salvation : therefore , do not delay, but embrace Christ, lest death surprise you ere ye be aware, and so the acceptable day be lost. But unto these who think they may delay till death , I say , surely there are many damned Atheists in hell that (sometimes) did think as ye think, I will make all wrongs right when death and I shal meet : I hope that three days repentance will satisfy for all my wrongs ; for I am sure there are many in hell , who did never get three days to think upon their former wayes. Therefore, O come, come and embrace Christ presently. Now are ye all perswaded of this truth, that ye shal once see death ? Then study a tender walking ; for , believe me , there are many of us that shal go thorow death with many bruised bones , because of untender walking before God : We know it is not the multitude of words can perswade you to embrace Christ, for many of you never minded the thing ; but believe me , death will preach these things unto you in a more terrible manner then we can do at this time. Therefore I say to each of you , O prepare to meet thy God , for if death find you in an estranged estate from God , I desie the Angels in Heaven to free you out of that estate ; and the day is coming wherein thou shalt cry out , O fighter of the great salvation that I am , I woud give ten thousand worlds

worlds for one sermon again that I once had
wherein Christ was freely offered to me, when thou
shalt be tormented without hope of remedie
therefore while it is to day harden not your heart
for your late wishes shal not be granted when
are gone, if ye make not haste. O therefore ha
haste in time, and come out from the land of your
privity, and from the house of your bondage, and
take Christ for your Redeemer, the guide of your
youth and old age. Now unto him who can le
you thorow all these steps betwixt you and He
aven, be eternal praise. Amen.



F I N I S.

